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DISCIPLINES

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

PART I.

IN ENGLISH, 1814 - 1841.

PART II.

IN GERMAN, 1814 - 1819, 1841.

TRANSLATED AND REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINALS.

EDITED BY

PROF. A. W. DRURY, D.D.



DAYTON, OHIO:
UNITED BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE,
W. J. SHUEY, PUBLISHER.
1895.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE republication of the early Disciplines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ has long been regarded not only as desirable, but as necessary. Of the edition of the Discipline issued after the first General Conference, convened in 1815, but a single copy is known to be extant. An earlier Discipline, assigned to the year 1814, is extant in a single manuscript copy. Other Disciplines are getting to be almost equally rare. Fortunately, with the exception of a few mutilated pages in the Discipline of 1815 and the absence of a number of the pages of the Discipline of 1829, the entire list of Disciplines is yet preserved intact at the Publishing House. The Historical Society, founded in 1885, has awakened a new and special interest in the early archives of the Church. The fit thing would have been for the Historical Society to have begun a series of Historical Society publications. But in the absence of special funds for this purpose, the most that the Historical Society could do was to enlist itself on the editorial side of the work and leave the publishing to the Publishing House, trusting that the interest in the volumes published will lead to the reimbursing of the House for all money expended. A second volume, consisting of the General and Annual Conference minutes up to 1830 or 1833, has already been arranged for. Other volumes should follow later.

The present volume is not a history of the Disciplines, but a publication of the Disciplines themselves down to the year 1841. As the Church began among the Germans and then passed over prevalingly to the English side, the German form in the earlier Disciplines requires special attention, while in the later Disciplines the English form holds the more important place. At a session of the Board of Managers of the Historical Society the writer was asked to take editorial charge of the two volumes proposed, and to call to his assistance what help might be necessary. He accordingly has translated the Disciplines of

1814 and 1815, and Rev. E. Light, English and German chaplain of the Central National Soldiers' Home, has furnished the translation for the Discipline of 1817. The edition of the Discipline bearing date "1819" and all others immediately following were at the time translated from the German to the English under the authority of the General Conference. Since 1837 the English form has been the standard. The Disciplines are here reproduced as found, no effort being made to correct errors, typographical or otherwise.

As the present plan contemplates giving the Disciplines rather than a comment on their contents, after a few explanations included in this preface, the Disciplines will follow without note or comment.

The Discipline occupying the first place in the following pages, namely, the manuscript Discipline assigned to 1814, preserved, no one knows how long, at the Publishing House, belongs, beyond all doubt, to the relative position indicated. The first germs of Discipline were taken from the rules adopted in 1785 for Otterbein's church in Baltimore. In allusion to the part performed by the Conference of 1789, Mr. Spayth uses the following language: "The disciplinary rules which governed the Church from the first conference held in Baltimore, 1789, up to 1815, the reader will not be displeased to find here in chief, although noticed before, comprising the Confession of Faith, same as in Discipline, and the following rules." Especially with reference to the Confession of Faith the above statement seems to be in the main correct.

The rules of Discipline cited by Mr. Spayth are more closely in accord with the rules adopted by the Baltimore congregation in 1785 than with the special rules handed down in definite form. These rules seem to have been given special definiteness, beginning with 1809, and by 1813 and 1814 to have attained that precision with which they appear in the manuscript Discipline and entered into the Discipline of 1815 under the head of duties of "Members in General."

As bearing on the date of the manuscript Discipline, no one can fail to see that it is the basis of the Discipline of 1815. That a definite Discipline was in existence in 1813 is clearly shown by the following extract from the minutes of that year of the Eastern Conference: "*Resolved*, That the Confession of Faith and the Christian Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ be printed." In 1814, at the session of the Conference in the East,

according to Mr. Spayth, "two manuscript copies of [a Discipline] were laid on the table, one by Bro. Christopher Grosh and the other by Bro. C. Newcomer." The first error in the statement is in affirming that two Disciplines were presented, instead of one Discipline signed by both of the persons named, due in part perhaps to the fact that in 1812 Mr. Grosh had presented to the Conference an elaborate confession over his own name. The second error is in the implication that what was presented was simply offered and not adopted. A point indicating the adoption of the Discipline is that Newcomer, who had been previously elected bishop for one year, was in 1814 elected bishop for three years, according to the article on that subject in the manuscript Discipline. Another testimony is a paragraph in the Miami Conference minutes of 1814, which recites that the Discipline of the Church, evidently that adopted earlier in the year by the Conference in the East, was protested against. The article in the manuscript Discipline on temperance, really in advance of the times and the existing sentiment of the Church, will awaken special interest.

Miami Conference, after the action just referred to, took the initiative in convening the first General Conference, in 1815, which revised the previous Discipline and provided for its printing, as shown in the following extract from the minutes: "The Confession of Faith and the Discipline were considered; somewhat enlarged, some things omitted; on the whole improved and ordered printed."

Though generally, and properly, called the "Discipline of 1815," the date on the printed Discipline was "1816," doubtless due to the fact that the printing was delayed till that year. This Discipline was exclusively in the German language. It may be proper to say that the word "church," either the English word or the German equivalent, except in composition, does not occur in any of the early disciplines; yet in translation the word "church" has in some cases been used where clearness seemed to require it. In early usage the term "*society*" was used for a local church, and also for the church at large. In the latter sense, however, sometimes the expression was the "whole society." In the German the term for circuit, presiding elder's district, and conference district, and for some other uses as well, was the same. The more common English term in each of these cases has been used in the translation.

The second General Conference met after an interval of two years, in 1817, though from the first it was intended that the regular interval should be four years. After the fuller and printed Discipline had been resolved upon in 1815, there were misgivings among the members of the General Conference as to whether too much of form, after the manner of some of the old and lifeless churches, had not been introduced, and so the next General Conference was ordered to be held in two years. Other reasons also may have contributed to this.

The Discipline bearing date "1819" has been an enigma to many, as no General Conference was held between 1817 and 1821. The explanation is this: The General Conference of 1817 had ordered the Discipline printed in English as well as in German. The Discipline bearing date "1817" was in German exclusively. In 1819, in order to comply with the order of the General Conference, a new edition was printed having the German text and the English translation on opposite pages. A slight difficulty is occasioned by the fact that the German text of 1819 varies somewhat from the German text of 1817. It is doubtless the case that the form in which things should appear was left largely with the editor of the Discipline, who was usually the secretary of the General Conference. In 1817 Rev. H. G. Spayth was the secretary, and he doubtless prepared the Discipline of 1817 and no doubt also the German text and translation of 1819. That the variations in the edition of 1819 were not due simply to liberty taken by the editor of the Discipline is evident by the fact that subsequent General Conferences retained in the main the changes made. The method followed was the regular method for the time. Yet the differences in the body of the two editions were, for the most part, purely verbal. A greater difference appears in the appendix, which may or may not have been regarded as part of the Discipline proper. In the appendix the forms for "Ordinations" and the "Marriage Ceremony" were varied somewhat and considerably extended, and an entirely new article was added on the "Necessity of Union Among Ourselves." The most natural explanation for the appearance of the new article is that it was adopted in 1817, but for some cause had not been incorporated in the Discipline published that year. The Discipline of 1817, in the section on the origin of the Church, inserted for the first time a list of the preachers present at the Conference of

1800. The list was in part incorrect. The edition of 1819 gave the list correctly, with the exception that the name of Jacob Baulus should probably be added. In addition to giving this correction, the edition of 1819 inserted a short account of the conferences of 1789 and 1791. The edition of 1819 has special importance, in that it established, through the English translation then made, what continued to be the basis of the English Discipline. From this time on the changes in the German editions of the Discipline are sufficiently indicated by the English text. Beginning with 1837 the German text was a translation of the English text.

The Discipline of 1821 will awaken special interest because of its references to slavery and intoxicating drinks. The Discipline of 1825 gives an important addition to the Confession of Faith, which new feature was itself modified in 1841, and again in 1857. For the manifold changes made from time to time, the reader is referred to the republished Disciplines themselves. The Discipline of 1829 gives the first law on Freemasonry. The Discipline of 1833 shows a disposition to guard more carefully the Confession of Faith. The Discipline of 1837 gives the new Constitution adopted that year, which was valid from the first, but was to be made binding under the terms of the final article by action of the General Conference four years later. The Discipline of 1841 gives the "new constitution" adopted that year by the General Conference. The conception and action of the General Conference of 1841 were doubtless foreshadowed by the following editorial expression in the *Religious Telescope* of November 25, 1840: "Any act of the General Conference is the act of the whole Church through their representatives thus assembled." Rev. A. Biddle, a surviving member of the Conference of 1841, states that the amendment clause of the Constitution then adopted was understood at the time as meaning that the action of the General Conference through the required majority was the action of the whole Church. An item of interest, furnished also by Mr. Biddle, is that the draft of the Constitution, as submitted to the General Conference, was drawn up by Mr. Spayth.

On some accounts it is believed to be of sufficient interest and importance to give the German text of the Discipline for 1841. This will accordingly be found following the German text of 1819.

It is sincerely hoped that this volume will prove but the beginning in making easily accessible the early documents and publications of the Church, and that through the materials thus furnished a more intelligent interest will be awakened in the history and work of the Church.

A. W. DRURY.

DAYTON, OHIO, August 15, 1895.

PART I.
DISCIPLINES IN ENGLISH,
1814 - 1841.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

ARTICLE 1. In the name of God we confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these three are one; the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence with both; that this God created heaven and earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

ART. 2. We believe in Jesus Christ; that he is very God and man, Saviour and Redeemer of the whole world; that all men through him may be saved if they will; that this Jesus suffered for us; that he died and was buried, rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, and that he will come again, at the last day, to judge the living and the dead.

ART. 3. We believe in the Holy Ghost; that he proceeds from the Father and the Son; that we through him must be sanctified and receive faith, thereby being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

ART. 4. We believe that the Bible is the word of God; that it contains the true way to our souls' well-being and salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it, with the influences of the Spirit of God, as his only rule and guide; and that without repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, and following after Jesus Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

ART. 5. We believe that the doctrine which the Holy Scriptures contain, namely, the fall in Adam and salvation through Jesus Christ, shall be preached and proclaimed throughout the whole world.

We recommend that the outward signs and ordinances, namely, baptism and the remembrance of the Lord in the distribution of the bread and wine, be observed; also the washing of feet, where the same is desired.

NOW [FOLLOW] THE RULES OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

ARTICLE 1. Only such brethren shall be acknowledged as preachers by the United Brethren in Christ, who have been proposed at the conference or a great meeting and by the same have been regularly examined and have answered the following questions: whether he believes in Christ, whether he has received the forgiveness of his sins, whether he follows after peace and holiness, whether the salvation of his soul, along with the salvation of his fellow-men, lies on his heart, whether he will submit himself to the counsel of his brethren. Such persons shall receive a written permission.

ART. 2. Such preachers shall, at the conference, every three years, elect bishops by a majority of votes.

ART. 3. *What are the duties of a bishop?* (1) To preside at the conference. (2) He shall have the right, with the consent of the conference, to act. (3) By the consent of the conference he has the liberty to choose elders.

ART. 4. *To whom are the bishops, elders, and preachers answerable for immoral conduct?* To the general [*allgemeine*] conference. But where the conduct is contrary to the Bible and the evidence is sufficient, the one to whom the case is known shall take other preachers with him and investigate the case. If it is found to be contrary to the Bible, then shall the accused remain silent till the conference.

ART. 5. Every preacher shall use diligence to build up the Church, as far as possible, by doctrine and life, by prayer and a godly walk. He shall seek to become acquainted with all the members of his society, so that he can call the same by name, and when it is possible, to talk with them about the salvation of their souls.

ART. 6. In each society leaders shall be chosen, whose duty it shall be to open and close the prayer-meetings and private meetings; also to visit the sick, and to exhort and keep in love every member of the society, and to keep a watch upon themselves.

ART. 7. Every member of the Church shall confess that he receives the Bible as the word of God; that from now on he will strive from his heart to seek his welfare in Christ, and to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, and flee the eternal wrath of God.

ART. 8. Every member shall endeavor to lead a strict and godly life, to be diligent in prayer, especially in private, and whenever possible, to be present at all meetings, both public services and prayer-meetings, for his own edification.

ART. 9. Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening and to set them a good example in all Christian virtues.

ART. 10. Every member shall endeavor to walk circumspectly as in the presence of God, to habituate himself to communion with God in his business occupations, to practice love toward friend and foe, to do good to the poor, and seek to be a follower of Jesus Christ indeed.

ART. 11. Every member shall abstain from strong drink, and use it only on necessity as medicine.

ART. 12. Every member shall abstain from ordinary occupations on Sunday, buying or selling, but spend the time in devotion, in singing spiritual songs to the [honor] and glory of God.

ART. 13. Every member of this Church shall contribute quarterly, with a free will, as much as his circumstances will allow for the support of the traveling preachers.

ART. 14. It is the duty of every member of this Church to live a peaceable, quiet, and godly life in his intercourse with all men, as it behooves a Christian to live in peace; especially shall each one be obedient to the government and the laws of the land, for government is ordained of God.

ART. 15. If disputes should arise between two or more brethren of the Church concerning debts, or any other cause, and the disputing parties cannot come to an agreement, then the preacher who has the oversight of the society shall investigate the matter, and shall recommend to the disputing parties a reference to a committee, which shall consist of three members of the society, of whom the plaintiff shall choose one, the defendant another, [and these two a third,] and these three shall settle the difficulties. In case, however, one of the contending parties should be dissatisfied with the decision, he may appeal to the next great meeting, by making this known to the preachers, to have a second settlement. If the preachers find sufficient reason therefor, a second settlement shall be allowed, in which case each of the parties shall choose two members of the Church, and these four a fifth, who shall decide the difficulties fully. If one of the persons should still not be satisfied with this decision, he thereby excludes

himself from the Church. If a member of the Church should refuse, in case of debts or other difficulties, to allow the matter to be settled, after this has been recommended to him by the preachers who have oversight of the society, or should a member of the Church begin suit before the civil court before the foregoing regulations have been followed, he shall be expelled from the Church, unless the difficulties are of such a kind that they demand and justify a legal decision.

CHRISTOPHER GROSH and CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

HAGERSTOWN :

PRINTED BY JOHN F. KOCH.

1816.

7

OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord our God to awaken persons in different parts of the world, to raise up anew a fallen Christianity and preach the doctrine of Christ crucified in its purity.

At the same time he remembered also the Germans in America, who lived here and there in this extended country, and had therefore but seldom an opportunity to hear the preaching of the gospel of the cross for their edification, and but seldom in their mother tongue, and in many places not declared with the purity and earnestness demanded.

Among others he awakened an Otterbein, a Boehm, and a Geeting, and armed them with his spirit, grace, and power, to labor in his neglected vineyard, that he might call also, among the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master, saw the divine blessing on their labors, and established in various places excellent societies, and led to Christ many precious souls. Their sphere of action at length extended itself more and more, so that they were compelled to look about for more laborers in the vineyard; for the harvest was so great, and the laborers but few. God awakened others, whom he also made willing to consecrate their powers to the Lord. Such persons were accepted by one or another of the preachers and by them designated to the preacher's office.

The number of members in the different parts of the Church increased from time to time, and extended through the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. At the same time, at great meetings, Otterbein held at times conferences with the preachers who were present. He placed before them the importance of the preacher's office, how necessary it was to use all earnestness in the work of saving souls. They took, therefore, counsel as to how they might be most useful, and received such persons as fellow-laborers of whom they had reason to believe that they had experienced religion in their hearts, were faithful,

and had qualified minds. These persons they armed for the work of the Lord. The number of members continued to increase more and more. In order now to labor in a truly useful and church-like way, the preachers saw themselves obliged to appoint a conference where they might come together to unite themselves properly; because some were Reformed, others Lutherans, others Mennonites, etc. They therefore appointed the 25th of September, 1800, at the house of Frederick Kenp, in Frederick County, Maryland, for the conference. There came together thirteen preachers, who united themselves into a society which bears the name, "The United Brethren in Christ." They elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as superintendents or bishops. Each one was allowed liberty to baptize according to his own view.

From this time forth the society increased more and more. Preachers were appointed who traveled continually (because the preaching places could not otherwise be supplied). The work extended itself into the States of Ohio and Kentucky. It became now necessary to appoint a conference in the State of Ohio, because it was too difficult to go annually so far to the conference.

Meantime, Brother Boehm died and Brother Otterbein desired that a bishop should be elected (because he was himself no longer able to superintend) who should take charge of the work and thereby preserve discipline and order, because it was determined at the first conference that if one of the bishops should die another should be elected. Therefore, Brother Christian Newcomer was elected bishop for a certain time to take the oversight of the Church.

For a long time the want of a discipline in the Church had been deeply felt, and already at different times something thereat had been done. Finally, it was resolved at the conference in the State of Ohio, that a head or general conference should be held which should undertake the work of making the discipline in some respects more perfect, as might seem best for the Church.

The members of this conference were to be elected from the preachers in the various parts of the Church by the members of the Church through a majority vote. There were present at the conference the following preachers, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Troyer, George Benedum, Abraham Troxel, Christian Berger, Abraham Mayer, John Snyder, Henry Kumlér, Henry Spayth, Isaac

Niswander, Christian Krum, and Jacob Baulus. These met June 6, 1815, near Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, where they, after mature deliberation, approved as proper and useful the following doctrine and rules, and delivered the same in love and humility to the Church, with the sincere wish that this doctrine and these rules, along with the Word of God, might be observed. For God is a God of order, and where no order or discipline is, there love and fellowship are lost. Therefore, let us follow the counsel of the Lord, who taught us that we, through humility, should esteem one another better than ourselves, and seek to have the same mind as Jesus Christ, who took upon him the form of a servant and became obedient even unto the death of the cross, that he might obtain for us grace and strength, that we, out of love and humility, might submit one to another. Whoever cannot submit himself lacks grace, love, and humility. Therefore said Jesus, "Whoever among you desires to be the greatest, let the same be the servant of others." Thus must we love one another. Therefore said Jesus, "Thus shall all men know that you are my true disciples, if you love one another; and whoever has not love abides in death." Thus let us practice love, that we may obtain the glory which Jesus besought from his Father for his disciples, that we may be one even as he and the Father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us seek to be like-minded, in unison, helpful, no one thinking or speaking evil of another, but imploring the Lord that he will grant us his Spirit and earnestness, that we may live a true Christian life, to his glory and to our eternal welfare. Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence with both; that this triune God created heaven and earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ; that he is very God and man; that

he, by the Holy Ghost, assumed his human nature in Mary, and was born of her; that he is the Saviour and Redeemer of the whole human race, if they with faith in him accept the grace proffered in Jesus; that this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and that he shall come again at the last day, to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost; that he is equal in being with the Father and the Son; that he proceeds from both; that we are through him enlightened; through faith justified and sanctified.

We believe in a holy church, communion of saints, resurrection of the flesh, and a life everlasting.

We believe that the Bible, Old and New Testament, is the word of God; that it contains the true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to receive it with the influences of the Spirit of God, as his only rule, and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true penitence, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We believe that the doctrine which the Holy Scriptures contain, namely, the fall in Adam and the redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the whole world.

We believe that the outward means of grace are to be in use in all Christian societies, namely: that baptism and the remembrance of the death of the Lord in the distribution of the bread and wine are to be in use among his children, according to the command of the Lord Jesus; the mode and manner, however, shall be left to the judgment of every one. Also, the example of feet-washing remains free to every one.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES.

In what manner and order shall the transactions of the conferences be conducted?

It is desired that on these occasions all things be done as in the presence of God; that whoever has anything to say, rise and speak freely whatever he has in his heart.

How and after what manner shall the members of the General Conference be chosen?

In every district the itinerant preachers, if such are present (if such are not present, then the local preachers residing on the district), shall advise the societies that they elect two elders from their district. But all of the elders of the district who are capable of going to the Conference shall be put in nomination and the same made known some time beforehand, and those two who shall have a majority of votes shall be the members of the General Conference. The votes taken at each place shall be recorded in writing and be attested by a preacher present or a leader. The presiding elder of the district shall examine the statement, and should any two have a like number of votes, he shall decide which of them is elected.

How often shall the General Conference be held?

Every four years.

Has the General Conference any power which the annual conference has not?

Yes; it alone has the power to elect a bishop from the presiding elders every four years, and to alter or amend the discipline or rules as it may find proper, under the conditions and with the exception that no article shall be established which shall abolish or do away the itinerant plan. The General Conference shall also determine the districts where the annual conferences shall be held.

Who are the members of the annual conference?

All of the elders and preachers who have received a written permission and are in the district of such conference or shall be received by the same.

In what manner and order shall the transactions be conducted?

1. There shall first be read a chapter from the Bible, and brief remarks made thereon; also singing and prayer as often as the conference convenes, with singing and prayer again at the close.

2. The conference shall elect a presiding elder and a secretary to act with the bishop.

3. The preachers shall be examined as to their conduct toward God, toward one another, and toward their fellow-men; whether their conduct is blameless; whether they employ as much time as possible in extending the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be admitted on trial?

5. What preachers must continue longer on trial?

6. Are any to be elected elders?
7. Have any of the preachers died?
8. Who are the presiding elders?
9. Who offers himself to travel?
10. What has been collected to meet contingent expenses, and what to make up the allowance of the traveling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? Have they received their dues?
11. When and where shall the next conference be held?
12. Have the elders been ordained?
13. On what circuits are the preachers stationed this year?
14. Is there anything more to do?
15. Has the conference appointed the districts within its bounds for the election of members of the General Conference?
16. Has all that has been done been entered upon the protocol?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF A BISHOP, AND OF HIS OFFICE AND DUTY.

How is a bishop constituted?

The General Conference shall elect him by a majority of votes, from the presiding elders who have been elected to the General Conference; but the conference is at liberty to retain a bishop yet another four years. A bishop or a bishop-elect must be capable of traveling the different districts and conferences; otherwise he cannot be elected. A bishop thus elected shall be ordained by the laying on of hands by a bishop and a presiding elder. Should no bishop be present, two presiding elders are authorized to act.

What are the duties of a bishop?

1. To preside at our conferences, along with a presiding elder chosen for this purpose.
2. He shall, along with two presiding elders whom he may choose, appoint the traveling preachers to their various circuits; provided, however, that no preacher shall remain longer than three consecutive years at the same place, unless on account of family circumstances, and with the consent of the conference, no limits as to the time should be set.

3. The bishops shall designate the districts to be traveled by the presiding elders.

4. In the intervals of the conferences, he has power, along with the presiding elders in his district, to change traveling preachers where they think it best; also to receive or to suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall travel throughout the bounds of the various conferences, and shall have in spiritual things the oversight of all the societies.

6. To him it belongs to perform the rite of ordination.

7. If a bishop ceases to serve the various conferences in the Church and to travel the districts, can he still exercise his episcopal office among us? No; unless he should be sick, or there should be other like circumstances.

8. If at any time it should so occur that our Church, by reason of death, suspension, or other cause, should have no bishop, what course shall be taken? Each annual conference shall choose a president from the presiding elders, who shall serve in the bishop's place during the session of the conference. The president thus chosen shall also attend the other conference. He shall take his seat along with the president there chosen, that he may act with him in the conference, and the president there chosen shall in like manner attend the other conference; so that each conference may know the state of affairs in the other conference, and that love and communion may be maintained, etc., until the General Conference, which shall again elect a bishop.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS: THEIR ELECTION, OFFICE, AND DUTIES.

How shall the presiding elders be elected?

The bishop shall propose to the conference some of the elders who have finished their probation, and, with the consent of the conference, elect them for two years.

What are the duties of a presiding elder?

1. To travel the district assigned him, and to preach as often as he can.

2. He shall have oversight of the traveling and local preach-

ers on his district, and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible conduct them, administer the Lord's Supper, hold quarterly conferences with the preachers, exhorters, and leaders present, examine whether the traveling and local preachers do their duty,—especially whether the local preachers, where possible, preach every Sunday, and where there are several change them at times, so that the most good may result,—and exhort them that they maintain discipline, order, love, and earnestness in the societies.

4. He can also exchange the traveling preachers on his district, but he must first consult the bishop. He can also receive or suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall give the bishop a report of the condition of his district, and have a reckoning with the traveling preachers, that he may lay the same before the conference. He shall allow a single man eighty dollars, and a married man and his wife twice that amount. Only traveling preachers who travel a circuit are to be reckoned with. Local preachers shall receive nothing, unless for a time they serve a circuit, in which case they shall receive an allowance for the time. Where a preacher is stationed in a city, the society there must support him.

6. How long may a bishop place a presiding elder over a given district? As long as is believed useful and proper.

7. Should it so happen that there should be a time when there is no bishop, each presiding elder shall exercise special care over the societies in his district, that everything may be preserved in love and earnestness, and that they each give the other information as to the condition of his district. Should it so happen that one or the other district should be without a presiding elder, what course should be taken? Information thereof should be given to the bishop, who should, from the elders of the district, make an appointment thereto¹ [to act till the conference, where it is possible. In case there should be no bishop, then the nearest presiding elder shall appoint one in case he cannot himself take charge of the work.

¹ Here the page is mutilated. The corresponding passage in the Discipline of 1817 is given in brackets, extending to "Section Fifth," on the following page.

[SECTION FIFTH.]

OF THE ELDERS: THEIR ELECTION, OFFICE AND DUTY, AND
ORDINATION.

How is an elder constituted?

After a probation of two years he may be accepted by the annual conference; may, by the bishop and¹ [[a presiding elder] with the laying on of their hands, be ordained; on this condition, however: that the conference is convinced that the requirements of verses 6-9 of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to Titus are fulfilled in him. This Scripture shall be read to each one at his ordination.

[What is an elder's office and duty?

[1. To preach as often and as much as] he can, and to baptize, to solemnize marriage, to assist the presiding elders in administering the Lord's Supper, and when the presiding elder cannot be present one or two elders shall perform this office; he shall also conduct all parts of public divine worship, establish class-meetings where it is practicable, and hold the same, and help in the election of leaders.

2. To take quarterly a voluntary collection for the traveling preachers and for the poor, to take a statement thereof at every place and by the² [leader attested, and if there is no leader present, then it shall be signed by a member, enabling him thus to make settlement with the presiding elder, that everything may be done in order.]

3. Where a local elder or preacher preaches at a place where no traveling preacher comes, he shall take a collection and take a statement of the same and send it to the presiding elder, or bring or send it to the conference.

4. Should a traveling preacher or elder desire to leave the circuit assigned him, he shall first notify the presiding elder. Should any one leave or neglect his charge unless through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be answerable therefor to the next conference.

¹ The break here may be supplied from the Discipline of 1817, as in brackets, extending to "as much as."

² Here a torn page must be restored from the Discipline of 1817, as in brackets.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND THEIR OFFICE
AND DUTIES.

How shall a preacher be received by the annual conference?

1. In the time between conferences, by the bishop or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder who supplies the place of the presiding elder at an annual or great meeting, till the next session of the conference. No one will be received otherwise than on probation. One who is on probation may be admitted or rejected without any injustice being done him. Otherwise there would be no probation.

2. Every person proposed as a preacher shall be examined by the conference, and the following questions shall be asked:

Has he known God in Christ as a sin-pardoning God?

Has he received the forgiveness of his sins?

Is the love of God through the Holy Ghost shed abroad in your heart?

Has he received the peace of God?

Does he follow after holiness?

Has he a right knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, and sanctification, and redemption?

3. Does the salvation of his own soul and the salvation of his fellow-men lie nearer his heart than all else in the world beside?

Can he subject himself to the counsel of his brethren?

Will he be obedient, speaking or remaining silent as the brethren may think best?

Is he willing, as far as he is able, to uphold the itinerant plan (or traveling the circuit), and to support the same as much as possible?

4. What is the duty of a preacher?

To preach Christ crucified wherever he can find hearers; to establish class-meetings where it is practicable; to converse with the members on the condition of their souls; to seek to direct aright the tempted, to seek to stimulate the slothful, and to seek to build up all as far as possible in faith, in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ; never to fail to visit the sick; to seek to confirm the word which he preaches by his life and walk.

5. What are the directions given to a preacher?

That he be diligent, never trifle away his time in unnecessary

things at any place, always be serious; that his motto be, "Holiness unto the Lord"; that he avoid all lightness and jesting; that he speak with moderation, and conduct himself discreetly with women, and demean himself as a true Christian.

6. He shall ever be averse to crediting evil reports, unless with sufficient evidence, and always, as far as is consistent with truth, put the most favorable construction on all things. He shall speak evil of no one; whatever may be his thought, he should keep it to himself until he can declare it to the person concerned.

7. Let his business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment he shall give himself up. He should visit those in need; in all things act not according to his own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it becomes him to employ his time in the manner before described,—in preaching, in visiting from house to house, in teaching, and prayer, and meditating on the word of God; with these to be occupied till the Lord shall come.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DEALT WITH.

What shall be done if a bishop, or presiding elder, or elder, or preacher is reported guilty of an offense which in the Word of God is made an act requiring expulsion?

1. If a bishop is accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? Where such accusation prejudicial to the gospel may occur, it shall be made known to a presiding elder and to an elder, who shall make an examination whether there is just cause of complaint. But, as the apostle says, they should not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. Should it now appear that he is justly accused, they shall make a written statement of the case and send a copy to the bishop, and appoint a time when they may come together, when the accuser and the bishop may be present. An investigation shall be made by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall remain silent till the annual conference. There the presiding elders and the elders shall again make an

investigation. If he is found guilty, he shall be suspended from his office.

2. If a presiding elder is accused of immoral conduct, what shall be done? Where such accusations prejudicial to the gospel may occur, the nearest elder and a preacher shall investigate. Should it appear that he is guilty, they shall make a written statement of the case and send a copy to the presiding elder, and appoint a time when they shall come together, when the accuser and the presiding elder may be present. In the absence of the bishop another presiding elder and two elders shall be summoned, who shall make an investigation. If he is found guilty, he shall remain silent till the conference; there shall he be answerable.

3. If an elder, or preacher, or exhorter shall be accused of immoral conduct, what shall be done? The preacher in the vicinity, to whom the matter is known, shall take with him another preacher, or an exhorter, or a leader and make an investigation. Should it appear that he is guilty, notice thereof shall be given him and a time appointed when they and the accuser and the accused may be present. In the absence of the bishop or presiding elder three elders or preachers shall make an investigation. If he is found guilty, he shall be silent till conference, where he shall be answerable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Every member of the Church shall confess that he receives the Bible as the word of God; that he will strive from his heart to seek his welfare in Christ Jesus, and to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, that he may flee the eternal wrath to come.

Every member shall endeavor to lead a strict and godly life, to be diligent in prayer, especially in private, and whenever possible, to be present at all meetings, both public services and prayer-meetings, for his own edification.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and to set them a good example in all Christian virtues.

Every one shall endeavor to walk circumspectly, as in the

presence of God, to habituate himself to communion with God in his business occupations, never to speak evil of his fellow-men, to practice love toward friend and foe, to do good to the poor, and seek to be a follower of Jesus Christ indeed.

Every member shall refrain from all unnecessary work on Sunday; neither buy nor sell, but spend the time in devotion, in reading and hearing the Word of God, and in singing spiritual hymns, to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this Church shall contribute quarterly, with a free will, as much as his circumstances will allow, for the support of the traveling preachers.

It is the duty of every member to lead a peaceable, quiet, and godly life in his intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace. Especially shall each one be subject to the government, as the Word of God requires.

Among such members of the Church the preachers shall establish one or more class-meetings, where it is practicable. The members shall, where it is possible, assemble themselves once in each week at an appointed place to hold prayer-meetings among themselves, that they may be built up in the presence of God and in love for good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class, leaders shall be elected in the presence of the preacher, whose duty it shall be to appoint prayer-meetings; to open and close them; also to hold class-meetings at times; to exhort and preserve in love every member, and to keep watch upon himself.

If members trespass against each other as brethren or sisters, correct the fault first between thee and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast won him. If he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more in order that in the mouth of two or three witnesses the whole matter may be established. If he will not hear them, tell the matter to the church. If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and publican.

If disputes should arise between two or more members of the Church concerning debts or any other cause, and the disputing parties cannot come to an agreement, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher who resides in the vicinity, shall investigate the matter and shall recommend to the disputing parties a reference to a committee, which shall consist of three members of the society; of whom the plaintiff shall choose one, the defendant another, and these two a third.

These three shall settle the difficulties. In case, however, one of the contending persons should be dissatisfied with the decision, he may appeal to the next quarterly or great meeting, by making this known to the presiding elder or elders, to have a second settlement. If the preachers find sufficient reason therefor, a second settlement shall be allowed; in which case each of the parties shall choose two members of the Church, and these four a fifth, who shall decide the difficulties fully. If one of the persons should still not be satisfied with this decision, he thereby excludes himself from the Church. If a member of the Church should refuse, in case of debts or other difficulties, to allow the matter to be settled, after this has been recommended to him by a preacher or leader who has the oversight; or a member of the Church should begin suit at law, before the foregoing regulations have been followed, he shall be expelled from this Church, unless the difficulties are of such a kind that they demand and justify a legal decision, as in the case of executors or administrators.

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF A GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD ON THE
SECOND DAY OF JUNE, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD,
1817, IN MOUNT PLEASANT, WESTMORE-
LAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

GREENSBURG, PENN.:
PRINTED BY JOHN ARMBRUST & CO.
1817.

CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord our God to raise up men in the different parts of the world who should restore again the decayed Christianity, and preach the doctrine of the cross in its purity.

He remembered at the same time the Germans in America, who resided widely scattered over this extensive land; who, therefore, had seldom opportunity to hear the preaching of the cross for their edification, and rarely in their mother tongue, and in many places not in that purity and earnestness of presentation as it should have been.

Among others he raised up also an Otterbein, a Boehm, and a Geeting, and equipped them with spirit, grace, and power to labor in his so sadly neglected vineyard, that he might also call sinners to repentance among the Germans in America. These obeyed the call of their Lord and Master, were blessed in their labor, and so raised up here and yonder prosperous societies, and led many precious souls to Christ. Gradually the circle of their labors widened so that they felt constrained to look about for fellow-laborers in the vineyard, for the harvest was great and the laborers but few. God awakened others, who also became willing to consecrate their powers to the Lord. These were then received by one or another as fellow-laborers.

The number of Church members in the different portions of the land grew from time to time, and spread themselves in the States of Maryland, [Pennsylvania, and Virginia,] for which reason Otterbein would sometimes hold conference with the preachers who were present at the great meetings. He represented to them the solemnity of the ministerial office—how necessary it was to put forth earnest endeavors to save souls. They likewise counseled how they might be most useful, and received such as colaborers of whom they had reason to believe that they had experienced Christianity at heart. The number of members increased constantly more and more. That they might now labor

quite advantageously together, the preachers saw themselves obliged to appoint a conference, where they might meet to unite themselves thoroughly, for some were Reformed, others Lutheran, others Mennonites, etc. Therefore, they determined to meet on the 25th of September, 1800, in the house of Frederick Kemp, in Frederick County, Maryland. There met of their number thirteen, namely, W. Otterbein, J. Boehm, J. Geeting, C. Newcomer, P. Lehman, G. Pfrimmer, P. Kemp, C. Grosh, D. Strickler, C. Krum, H. Krum, A. Herschey. They united themselves into a society bearing the name, "The United Brethren in Christ." They chose William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as superintendents or bishops. They agreed to grant each one liberty to baptize in conformity with his own views.

Henceforth the society spread more and more. They received preachers who traveled constantly (inasmuch as the appointments could not be served otherwise). The work spread into the States of Ohio and Kentucky. It was now necessary to hold a conference in the State of Ohio, as it was too burdensome for those preachers to travel annually so far to conference.

Brother Boehm died meanwhile, and Brother Otterbein desired that a bishop should be elected (because he himself could no longer superintend) who should take upon himself the work of maintaining discipline and order, for it was decided upon at the first conference that if one of the bishops died another should be chosen. Then Brother Christian Newcomer was chosen bishop for a time, who should assume the superintendence of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society had been felt for a long time, and several attempts toward this end had been made. Finally, it was resolved in the conference in Ohio that a principal or general conference should be held, which should undertake to make the discipline in some respects more perfectly to accord with the Word of God.

The members of this General Conference should be chosen from the preachers in the different portions by a majority vote of the members of the society; and the following preachers were present at the Conference, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Troyer, George Benedum, Abraham Troxel, Christian Berger, Abraham Mayer, John Snyder, Henry Kumler, Henry Spayth, Isaac Niswander, Christian Krum, and Jacob Baulus. These met on the 6th of June, 1815, near Mount Pleasant, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania,

where, after due consideration, they found the following doctrine and rules as proper and profitable for recommendation to the society, in love and humility, with the sincere wish that this doctrine and these rules, in connection with the Word of God, may be observed. For God is a God of order, and where there is no discipline there all love and union decline. Therefore, let us follow the counsel of the Lord, which teaches that we humbly seek in honor to prefer one another and seek the mind that was in Jesus Christ, who took the form of a servant and became obedient unto death upon the cross, that he might secure us grace and power to submit ourselves one to another in love and humility. Whoever is not able to submit himself is yet in lack of grace, love, and humility. Wherefore, Jesus says, "Whosoever among you would be the greatest shall be the servant of the others." Thus we must love one another. Jesus says, "Thus shall all men know that ye are my true disciples, when ye have love one to another; and he that doth not love abideth in death." Therefore, let us practice love, that we may obtain the glory for which Jesus prayed the Father in behalf of his disciples, that we might be one even as he and the Father are one. Therefore, ye beloved brethren, let us seek to be of one mind, abiding in unity and harmony. Let no one speak or think evil of another, but pray the Lord that he may give us his spirit and zeal, that we may promote Christianity thoroughly, to his glory and our eternal welfare. Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we confess before all men, that we believe in the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost of like being with both; that this triune God has created, sustains, governs, protects, and preserves heaven and earth, and all that therein is, both visible and invisible.

We believe in Jesus Christ; that he is truly God and man; that he assumed his humanity through the Holy Spirit in Mary,

and that he was born of her; that he is the Saviour and Redeemer of the whole human race, if they accept the proffered grace of Jesus by faith in him; that this Jesus suffered for us; that he died on the cross, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended to heaven, is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us, and will come again at the last day to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost; that he is of like being with the Father and Son; that he comforts the believers, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian church, the fellowship of the saints, resurrection of the flesh, and an eternal life.

We believe that the Bible, Old and New Testament, is God's word; that it contains the true way to our salvation; that every true Christian shall accept it under the influence of God's Spirit as his only guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, genuine repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We believe that what the Holy Scriptures contain, namely, the fall in Adam and the redemption through Jesus Christ, should be preached to all the world.

We believe that the external means should be practiced in Christian societies, namely, baptism and the remembrance of the death of the Lord Jesus, among his children. The mode and manner shall, however, be left to the judgment of the individual. Also, the example of feet-washing is left to the judgment of the individual.

SECTION SECOND.

CONCERNING THE GENERAL AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES.

Question. According to what manner and order shall the proceedings of the conferences be conducted?

Answer. It is desired that whatever may be done upon such an occasion shall be done as in the presence of God; whoever has anything to say, shall rise and speak freely, as it is in his heart.

Ques. How and in what manner shall the members of a General Conference be elected?

Ans. In each district the itinerant preachers, if there be any

such (if not, then the local preachers who live in the circuit), shall represent to the societies that they elect two elders from their district. They shall not fail to put all the elders on the district who can go to the Conference in nomination, and make it known some time in advance; and the two who obtain the majority of votes shall be the members of the General Conference. The votes shall, however, be recorded at each place and subscribed by a preacher who was present, or by a leader. The presiding elder of the district shall examine it, and should two of them have an equal number of votes, he shall decide which of the two is elected.

Ques. How often shall the General Conference be held?

Ans. Every four years.

Ques. Has the General Conference any power which the annual conference does not have?

Ans. Yes; it alone has the power to choose quadrennially two bishops from among the elders, and to change or improve the discipline or rules according as it sees fit, under the condition and exception that no clause be enacted which should suspend or put away the traveling of circuits [the itineracy]. The General Conference shall also determine the districts where the annual conferences shall be held.

Ques. Who are the members of the annual conference?

Ans. All the elders and preachers who have received a written license and reside within the bounds of such conference or are received into it.

Ques. After what manner and order shall the proceedings be undertaken?

Ans. 1. A chapter from the Bible shall be read and brief remarks made upon it; then there shall be singing and prayer, and this as often as the conference sits, also closing it with singing and prayer.

2. The conference shall elect a secretary, and should one of the bishops be absent, elect also one of the presiding elders to assist in presiding.

3. The preachers are to be examined as to their conduct toward their neighbors; whether their conduct is blameless; whether they devote as much time as possible to the spreading of the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be received on probation?

5. What preachers are to be continued on probation?

6. Are there any to be elected to elders' orders?
7. Have any of the preachers died?
8. Who are the presiding elders?
9. Who is willing to travel?
10. What has been collected to defray contingent expenses and to raise the salary of the itinerant preachers? Has settlement been made with them? Have they received what is due them?
11. When and where shall the next conference be held?
12. Have the elders been ordained?
13. On what circuits have the preachers this year been appointed?
14. Is there anything more to be done?
15. Has the conference determined the districts in its bounds for the purpose of electing the members of the General Conference?
16. Have all the proceedings been recorded?

SECTION THIRD.

CONCERNING THE ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF THE BISHOPS, AND MATTERS PERTAINING TO THEIR OFFICE AND DUTY.

Ques. How shall the bishops be constituted?

Ans. The General Conference shall elect them by a majority of the votes of the elders constituting the General Conference. The Conference is also at liberty to reelect the bishops for other four years. The bishops must, however, be able to travel over the different circuits and conferences; otherwise they cannot be elected. Those who are chosen shall be ordained through the laying on of hands by a bishop and one elder; but should there be no bishop present, the ordination may be performed by two elders.

Ques. What are the duties of the bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside at our conferences.
2. They shall, with the assistance of an elder, whom they choose, appoint the itinerant preachers to their respective circuits, with the limitation that no itinerant preacher shall remain longer than three successive years at the same place, except in

view of special circumstances and with the consent of the bishops.

3. The bishops shall assign the presiding elders to the districts which they shall travel.

4. During the interim between the conferences, they have power, along with the presiding elders, to change the itinerant preachers where they shall deem it better; also to receive or suspend preachers until the time of conference.

5. They shall travel over the different conferences, as far as their boundaries extend, and have the spiritual supervision over all the societies.

6. It is their duty to conduct the ordination service.

7. If a bishop ceases to serve the different conferences in the Church, and to travel over the different districts, can he nevertheless perform the functions of his office among us? No; unless he should be sick, or hindered by other circumstances of like character.

8. Should it occur that our Church should at any time be without a bishop, because of death, or suspension, or on whatever account, what shall be the advice in such case? The elder who shall be chosen in the absence of a bishop to preside at the conference shall serve in the place of the bishop as long as the conference continues. This thus elected chairman shall also serve the other conference. He shall preside with the chairman chosen by the other conference concurrently, and the latterly chosen chairman shall in like manner serve the other conference, so that each conference may know the state of affairs in the other conference; so that love and fellowship, etc., may be maintained until the General Conference, which again elects bishops.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to provide for a suitable sermon to the preachers present at the close of each conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

CONCERNING THE PRESIDING ELDERS: THEIR ELECTION, OFFICE, AND DUTIES.

Ques. How shall the presiding elders be chosen?

Ans. The bishops shall nominate several of the elders who have stood their probation, and, with the consent of the conference, choose them for four years.

Ques. What are the duties of the presiding elder?

Ans. 1. To travel the district to which he was appointed by the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has the supervision of the itinerant and local preachers in his district, to the end that they conduct themselves in conformity with the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible conduct them, administer the Lord's Supper, hold quarterly conferences with the preachers, exhorters, and leaders present, and inquire whether the traveling and local preachers perform their duties,—especially whether the local preachers preach, as far as possible, every Sunday, and where there are a number of them cause them to exchange sometimes, as may result in the accomplishment of most good,—and exhort them to maintain discipline, and order, and love, and zeal in the societies.

4. He can also exchange the itinerant preachers in his district (he shall, however, advise with a bishop); he can also receive preachers or suspend them until conference.

5. He shall inform the bishop of the condition of his district, and see to it that the itinerant preachers receive quarterly a proportionate support, inasmuch as their salary is taken from the money they collect upon their circuits. A single preacher shall, however, not receive over eighty dollars, and a married one shall be allowed one hundred and sixty dollars. Should the amount collected on one or the other circuit, however, not suffice, then it shall be put into the hands of a committee of the conference, which shall take off from other money collected and add to that which is deficient, according to their judgment. In the case of a preacher stationed in a city, the congregation must care for him.

6. Should it occur at any time that there should be no bishop, the presiding elders shall, each in his own district especially, care for the societies, that all things may be conserved in love and zeal; and information as to the condition of circuits shall be mutually exchanged between the elders. Should it occur, however, that there should be no presiding elder in one or the other district, what shall be advised? The bishop shall be informed thereof. He shall appoint one from among the elders in the district until conference. Should there be no bishop, however, then the adjoining presiding elder shall choose one if he cannot do the work himself.

SECTION FIFTH.

CONCERNING THE ELECTION, OFFICIAL DUTY, AND
ORDINATION OF ELDERS.

Ques. How shall an elder be chosen?

Ans. After a probation of two years he may be presented to the annual conference for ordination by the bishops with the laying on of hands, on this condition, however: that the conference is convinced that the requirements of verses 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the second chapter of Paul's Epistle to Titus are fulfilled in him. This shall be read to each candidate at the time of his ordination.

1. What is an elder's office and duty? To preach as often and much as he can, and baptize, solemnize marriages, assist the presiding elder at communion, and when the presiding elder cannot be present one or two of the elders shall administer in his stead. He shall take part in all the public services of God, seek to establish class-meetings, where the majority of the members regard it advisable, conduct the same, and help to elect leaders.

2. To take quarterly a free-will contribution for the itinerant preachers and the poor, keep a record of the same at each place, attested by the subscription of the leader, and if there is no leader present, then it shall be signed by a member, enabling him thus to make settlement with the presiding elder and have everything done in proper order.

3. Where a local elder or preacher, who is not in need of support, preaches at a place where no itinerant preacher serves, he shall take a collection and keep an account of the same and send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, or take it there, for the support of the needy local preachers who are poor and preach among the poor.

4. Should an itinerant preacher or elder wish to leave the circuit assigned him, then he shall first give the presiding elder written notice. Should any one leave or neglect [his charge], except on account of sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable for it to the next conference.

5. Where there are local preachers who are poor and needy, of whom it is desired that they preach, it is proper that the elders take collections in the societies to support such preachers according to the time they serve, yet not above that to which the itinerant preacher is limited.

SECTION SIXTH.

CONCERNING THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND THEIR OFFICE AND DUTIES.

Ques. How shall a preacher be received through the annual conference?

1. In the time between the conferences, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the circuit, or an elder who represents the office of a presiding elder at an annual or great meeting, until the next ensuing session of conference. No one will be received otherwise than upon probation. One who has been received on probation may be accepted or rejected without any injury to him. Otherwise there would be no probation.

2. Each person proposed for the ministry shall be examined by the conference on the following questions:

Ques. Has he learned to know God in Christ as a sin-pardoning God?

Has he obtained the pardon of his sins?

Has the love of God been shed abroad in your heart through the Holy Spirit?

Has he obtained the peace of God?

Does he follow after holiness?

Has he a correct knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification, and redemption?

3. Has he more concern for his and his neighbor's salvation than for all else in the world?

Can he submit to the advice of his brethren?

Will he be obedient to speak or hold his peace as the brethren may deem best?

Is he willing to aid in sustaining the itinerant plan (or to travel the circuit) to the extent of his ability, and to support the same as much as possible?

4. What is the duty of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ the crucified one wherever hearers are found; to establish class-meetings where it is profitable; to speak with the people concerning their souls' condition; to guide the tempted, to stir up the lukewarm, and to edify all in the faith, grace, and knowledge of Jesus Christ as much as possible; never to neglect visiting the sick, and with his life and conduct to enforce the word he preaches.

5. What counsel shall be given a preacher?

Ans. He shall be industrious, never squander time in unnecessary things at any place, be always grave; his motto be, "Holiness unto the Lord." He shall avoid all frivolity and jesting, speak modestly, and exercise discretion in his association with the female sex, and deport himself like a true Christian.

6. He shall always decline to believe accusations, unless they are sufficiently evident; he shall construe everything favorably as far as it can be made to agree with the truth. He shall speak evil of no one; whatever he may think of one, he shall keep it to himself until he can tell the one himself whom it concerns.

7. Let his employment be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment he shall consecrate himself entirely. He shall visit the needy. In all things he shall act not in view of self, but as a son of the gospel. As such it becomes him to use his time as prescribed,—in preaching, visiting from house to house, teaching and praying, and the study of the Word of God; thus he shall employ himself till the Lord comes.

SECTION SEVENTH.

CONCERNING THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS: HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

Ques. What shall be done in case a bishop, or presiding elder, or preacher is reported to have been guilty of an offense for which the Word of God requires expulsion?

Ans. If a bishop be accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? If accusation occurs which would be prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be made known to a presiding elder and an elder, who shall examine whether there is anything in the case; but they shall accept no complaint unattested by two or three witnesses, as the apostle says. Does it appear that he is justly accused, they shall put the case in writing and send the bishop a copy of it, and appoint a time to meet when the accuser and the bishop can be present, and the case shall be examined by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall be silenced until the annual conference, where the presiding elders and elders shall examine the case again. If he is found guilty, he shall be suspended from his office.

Ques. 2. If a presiding elder is accused of immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. In case of accusations detrimental to the gospel, the case shall be examined by the nearest elder and a preacher. Does it appear as if he were guilty, they shall make a written statement of the case and send the presiding elder a copy of it, and appoint a time when they shall meet, when the accusers and the presiding elder can be present. In the absence of the bishop another presiding elder and two elders shall be called. These shall examine the case. If he is found guilty, he shall be silenced till conference, where he shall be accountable.

Ques. 3. If an elder, or preacher, or exhorter be accused of immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher in the vicinity, to whom it is known, shall take with him another preacher, or exhorter, or leader and examine the case. Should it appear that he is guilty, he shall be notified, and a time shall be appointed when the accusers and the accused shall be present. In the absence of the bishop or presiding elder three elders or preachers shall examine the case. If he is found guilty, he shall be silenced until conference, where he shall be answerable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

CONCERNING MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Each member of the Church should confess that he believes the Bible to be the word of God; that he will henceforth endeavor to seek his salvation in Christ Jesus, and to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, that he may escape the impending eternal wrath.

Each member shall endeavor to lead a strictly godly life; to be diligent in prayer, especially in secret prayer, and attend, if possible, all the meetings, both public divine services and prayer-meetings, for his edification.

Heads of families shall never neglect to have family prayers morning and evening, and set a good example in all Christian virtues.

Every one shall endeavor to walk strictly as in the presence of God; to accustom himself in his business to a close fellowship with God; never to speak evil of his neighbor, to manifest love

toward friend and enemy, do good to the poor, and seek in very deed to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Every member shall keep the Sabbath, as required by the Word of God; not to buy or sell, but to spend the same in meditation, with reading and hearing the Word of God, and singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member in this society should freely contribute every three months as much as his circumstances will allow to support the itinerant preachers.

It is the duty of every member to lead a peaceable, quiet, and godly life; in his association with all people to live in peace as becometh a Christian. Especially shall every one be subject to the government, as the Word of God requires.

Where the majority of the members regard it as profitable, the preacher shall establish one or more class-meetings, where the members, as many as can, shall meet once a week to hold prayer-meetings together for mutual edification in the presence of God, and in love for good works in Christ Jesus.

In each class, leaders should be elected in the presence of the preacher, whose duty it shall be to appoint prayer-meetings, to open and close them, and sometimes to hold class-meetings; to exhort each member, and conserve them in love, and to keep watch upon himself.

When members offend against each other as brethren or sisters, rebuke first between thee and him alone. If he hears thee, then thou hast won him. If he hears thee not, then take one or two with thee, so that everything may be attested by the mouths of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to hear the church, regard him as a heathen and publican.

If a dispute should arise between two or more members of the Church, because of debts or any other cause, and the contending parties cannot come to an agreement, then the preacher who has charge of the society, or the preacher who resides in the vicinity, shall examine the matter, and shall propose to the disputing parties a reference to a committee, which shall consist of three members of the Church, of whom the accuser shall choose one, the accused another, and these two the third, and these three shall adjust the dissension. In case one of the contending parties should be dissatisfied with the decision, he may appeal to the next quarterly or great meeting by making

it known to the presiding elder, or an elder, and apply for a second endeavor to make peace. And if the preachers see a sufficient reason in this appeal, they shall grant it; in which case each party shall choose two members from the congregation and these four shall choose a fifth one; these shall determine the question in dispute finally. Should either of the persons, however, still be dissatisfied with the decision rendered, he shall thereby exclude himself from the Church. And if a member of the Church should refuse to submit a case of indebtedness or dispute, after it was recommended to him by a preacher or leader who had charge, or if a member of the Church enters suit at law, before the measures aforesaid have been adopted, then such member shall be expelled from this Church, unless the matter in dispute had been of a nature to require or justify a legal decision, as in the case of executors or administrators.

SUPPLEMENT.

CONCERNING VISITATIONS FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF A PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

Ques. How can we further assist those who submit themselves to our supervision?

Ans. In this: that we impart to them instruction in their homes, which is very necessary to foster faith in and communion with God; further, by avoiding a worldly disposition and cultivating a heavenly one; in that we foster brotherly love, so that there may exist no evil thinking or judging in one against the other, and that we do as we wish to be done by.

2. Each preacher must consider it his duty to visit the people in their houses, and exhort them to abound to every good work. Until this is done, and that seriously and zealously, we shall, upon the whole, be little benefited, and our godliness will not have a sufficiently deep foundation. Consequently, wherever we may be, we should not indulge in vain conversation.

These visitations from house to house and special exhortations are, no doubt, founded upon the solemn words of the apostle, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering."

CONCERNING THE INSTRUCTION OF THE YOUTH.

Ques. What shall be done in behalf of the rising generation?

Ans. Whosoever has any zeal for God and the welfare of souls, let him begin the work without delay. Where there are children whose parents belong to the Church, let him gather them as often as practicable and profitable; converse with, instruct, and exhort them in and to that which is good; pray with them earnestly, but simply, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in their youth.

MANNER AND METHOD OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

On the day appointed for the purpose a sermon and exhortation shall be delivered, in which the office of the ministry and its duties shall be explained.

Thereafter the bishop shall speak to the brethren present as follows: "Is there any among you to whom any trespass or other hindrance is known why one or the other of these persons should not be ordained to the office of an evangelical preacher, let him come forward in the name of God and make said transgression known."

If any violation or hindrance is discovered, the bishop shall defer the ordination of such person until the accused is found innocent.

Then shall one of the elders read impressively the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the first chapter of Paul to Titus. Thereafter the bishop shall proceed with the following examination of him who is to be ordained:

Ques. Have you assurance that you are inwardly moved through the Holy Spirit to take upon you the office of a preacher, to serve God therein to his name's glory and the edification of his church?

Ans. I trust I am.

Ques. Do you believe without reserve all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments?

Ans. I do believe them.

Ques. Will you use diligence to order your walk according to the doctrine of Christ, and as much as in you lieth present yourself to the flock of Christ as an example of Christian living?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Ques. Will you reverently obey those to whom the oversight

over you is entrusted, and follow their good exhortations with a willing and peaceable heart?

Ans. I will strive to do so by the grace of God.

The bishops (or a bishop and an elder) will now place their hands upon the head of each one severally, and the bishop shall say:

“Take thou herewith authority to execute the office of an evangelical preacher in the church of God, in the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

The bishop shall then present to each one the Bible and say:

“Take thou herewith authority to preach and interpret the Word of God in the church of Christ.”

MANNER AND METHOD OF ORDAINING A BISHOP.

After prayer, the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles may be read from the seventeenth verse to the close.

Then shall the bishop say to the one that is to be ordained:

“Brother, inasmuch as the Holy Scriptures command us not to lay hands hastily upon any one to rule in the church of Christ, you will answer the following questions:”

Ques. Are you convinced that the Word of God contains all that is necessary to our salvation through Christ, and are you determined to teach the people from out of it?

Ans. Yes.

Ques. Will you be faithful in ordaining others by laying on of hands and sending them out?

Ans. Yes.

Then shall the bishop and one or two elders lay their hands upon the chosen person kneeling before them, and the bishop shall say:

“Receive thou the grace of God to the office and service of a bishop in the church of God, which is herewith, by the laying on of our hands, committed unto you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Then shall the bishop present the Bible, saying:

“Give heed unto reading, doctrine, and exhortation. Consider well the things contained in this book; be a shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ, feeding them; assist the weak; seek the lost; be compassionate, that thou mayest receive the unfading crown of eternal life when the Chief Shepherd of the sheep shall appear. Amen.”

ADDRESS TO CANDIDATES FOR MARRIAGE.

“MUCH BELOVED: We are here gathered in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses, for the purpose of uniting these two persons in wedlock as man and wife.

“*J. Taber*: Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live with her in wedlock, to love, comfort, and honor her, to support and cherish her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her, and that as long as God shall spare thy life? If this is your purpose, then answer, ‘Yes.’”

Then the preacher shall address the woman:

“*B. Cathar*: Will you take this man to be your husband, to live with him in wedlock after the ordinance of God; will you render him obedience, helpfulness, love, and honor; in health and sickness cherish him, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him as long as God shall spare thy life? If this is your purpose, then answer, ‘Yes.’

“Extend to each other the right hand.”

The preacher will take their two hands together and say: “‘What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.’ And so I pronounce you man and wife, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bless you and keep you in the Lord, look upon you in mercy, and endow you with his spiritual gifts and grace, that ye may so live together in this world that in the future world ye may have eternal life. Amen.”

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

HAGERS-TOWN :
PRINTED BY GRUBER & MAY.

1819.

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OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world, who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans in America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otterbein*, a *Bahm*, and a *Guething*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labour in his neglected vineyard, and call, also, amongst the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labours were blessed; they established in many places excellent societies, and led many a precious soul to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow labourers in the vineyard; for the harvest was great, and the labourers but few. The Lord called others, who also were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers as fellow labourers.

The number of members of the society, in the different parts of the country, continued from time to time to increase, and the gracious work spread itself through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Great meetings were appointed and held annually several times; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present; represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavours to save souls. At one of these conversations, it was resolved to hold a conference of all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was accordingly held in Baltimore, in the year 1789. There were present:

William Otterbein,	Adam Lehman,
Martin Bœhm,	John Ernst,
George Adam Guething,	Henry Weidener.
Christian Newcomer,	

The second conference was held in York county, in Paradise township, at the house of brother Spangler, in the year 1791, where there were present the following persons, viz.

William Otterbein,	John Ernst,
Martin Bœhm,	John G. Pfrimmer,
George Adam Guething,	John Neidig,
Christian Newcomer,	Benedict Sander,
Adam Lehman,	

And after mature deliberation, how they might labour most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such as fellow labourers, of whom they had cause to believe that they had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time the number of members continued to increase more and more; the preachers therefore were obliged to appoint an annual conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labour most usefully to one common end; for some were Presbyterians, or church Reformed, some were Lutherans, others Mennonites, and yet others were Methodists. They, therefore, appointed a conference to be held the 25th of September 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland, at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. There were present as follows:

William Otterbein,	Christian Krum,
Martin Bœhm,	Henry Krum,
George Adam Guething,	John Hershey,
Christian Newcomer,	Jacob Geisinger,
Adam Lehman,	Henry Bœhm,
Abraham Dracksel,	Dietrick Aurauf
John George Pfrimmer,	

They there united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "*The United Brethren in Christ*;" and elected William Otterbein and Martin Bœhm, as superintendants or bishops, and agreed that each of them should be at liberty to baptise in such manner, as should best accord with his conviction.

From this time forth the society increased still more; preachers were appointed, who travelled continually (because the number of preaching places could in no other wise be attended), and the

work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It became necessary therefore to appoint a conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too labourious for the preachers, who laboured in those states, to travel such a distance annually to the conference.

In the mean time brothers Böhm and Guething died, and brother Otterbein desired, that another bishop should be elected (because infirmity and age would not permit him to superintend any longer), who should take charge of the society, and preserve discipline and order; for at a conference formerly held, it was resolved, that whenever one of the bishops die, another should be elected in his place—Therefore brother Christian Newcomer was then elected as bishop, to take charge of the superintendance of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society has long since been deeply felt; and partial attempts thereto having at different times been made, it was at length resolved at the conference in the state of Ohio, that a general conference should be held, who should take upon themselves to complete the same, so as to accord with the word of God. The members of this conference were to be elected from amongst the preachers in the different parts of the country, by a majority of the votes of the members of the society; and there were present at the conference, that were duly elected, the following preachers, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Tracksel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, John Schneider, Henry Kumler, Henry Spade, Isaac Nighswander, Christian Krum, and Jacob Baulus.

These met on the 6th of June, 1815, near Mountpleasant, Westmoreland county, Penn. where they, after mature deliberation, found it to be necessary, good and beneficial to deliver the following Doctrines and Rules of discipline to the society in love and humility, with the sincere desire, that these doctrines and rules together with the Word of God might be attended to and strictly observed. For God is a God of order, and where there is no order and discipline, there all love and communion will be lost. Therefore, let us attend to the counsel of our Lord, who taught us: That in lowliness of mind, we should esteem each other better than ourselves. Seek to be minded as Jesus Christ also was! Who took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even unto the death of the

cross, to obtain for us grace and strength, that we, from motives of love and humility, might submit one to the other. He who cannot submit himself, the same lacketh grace, love and humility; hence Jesus saith: Whoso amongst you shall desire to be the greatest, shall be the other's servant. If then we are to be the servants of each other, we must love one another. Jesus saith: Thus shall all men know that ye are my true disciples, if ye have love to one another; and whoso hath not love, the same continueth in death. Then let us practise love, that we may enjoy the glory and felicity, which Jesus obtained by prayer for his disciples, of his heavenly father, that we may be *one* even as he and the father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be likeminded, unanimous and concordant; and no one speak or think evil of the other: but implore the Lord, that he would graciously grant us his spirit and an earnest desire to lead a truly Christian life, to the honour and glory of his holy name, and to our own eternal welfare. Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the virgin Mary, and was born of her; that he is the saviour and mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and, that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the father and the son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive *it* with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, as also true penitence, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and the redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We further think, that the outward means, namely: baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, are to be in use and practised in all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on his children particularly to practise them: But the manner in which, ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of each. So also the practice or example of washing the feet must remain free to the judgment of every one.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

Question. After what manner and order are the transactions of the conferences to be considered?

Answer. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Qst. How and after what manner are the members of a General conference to be chosen?

Ans. In every district the itinerant preachers, if such are present, if not, the stationed or local preachers, who live in the district, shall advise the members of the society, that they elect two elders from out of their district; but all the elders in the district, who are capable of going to the conference, shall be put in nomination, and the same made known some time previous to the election; and those two, who shall have a majority of votes, shall be considered as members of the General conference. The votes taken at each place, shall be couched in writing, and

attested by one of the preachers or leaders then and there present. The presiding elder of the district shall examine the statement, and should any two or more have an equal number of votes, he shall determine by lot, who or which of them are elected.

Qst. How often are the General conferences to be held?

Ans. Every four years.

Qst. Has the General conference any other powers, which the Annual conference has not?

Ans. Yes, the members of the General conference alone have the power to elect two bishops from amongst the elders for four years; as also to alter and amend the discipline according as they may find it necessary and expedient: provided they do not establish any article, which may tend to abolish, undo or put aside the itinerant plan. The general conference has further to fix upon or determine the districts, where the yearly conferences are to be held.

Qst. Which are the members of the yearly conference?

Ans. All the elders and preachers, who have obtained a written permit, and are, for the time being, in the district where the conference is held, or who may be taken up and acknowledged in the same.

Qst. In what manner and order are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

Ans. 1. There will be read a chapter in the Bible, and brief remarks made on the contents; there will be sung and prayer performed, and that as often as the conference sits; and the sitting closed with singing and prayer.

2. The conference elects a secretary, and in case one of the bishops be absent, also one of the presiding elders, to act in conjunction with the bishop.

3. The preachers will be examined, what their deportment towards their fellow beings is; whether their conduct in life be blameless and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote or spread the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be admitted on trial?

5. What preachers are yet to continue on trial?

6. Are any to be elected as elders?

7. Have any of the preachers died?

8. Who are the presiding elders?

9. Who gives himself up to travel?

10. What has been collected, partly for contingent expences, and partly for making up the allowances of the travelling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? Have they received their dues?

11. When and where shall our next conference be held?

12. Are the elders ordained?

13. In what circuits are the preachers stationed this year?

14. Is there any thing more to do?

15. Has the conference appointed the districts in their circuit, for the purpose of holding the election for the members of the General conference?

16. Is all that has been transacted, entered in the protocol?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION AND CONSECRATION OF THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How are the bishops to be constituted?

Ans. The General conference shall elect them by the majority of the votes of the elders, who were elected to the General conference: But the conference may still be at liberty to retain the bishops yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as well as the bishops retained, must be capable of travelling the different circuits and of attending to the conferences, otherwise they cannot be elected. The persons thus elected shall be ordained by the laying on of the hands of our bishops and one or more elders, but if no bishop be present, then two elders shall perform the rite.

Quest. What are the duties of the bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside in our conferences.

2. They have, in conjunction with an elder, whom they select, to fix the appointments of the itinerant preachers for the several circuits, provided they shall not allow any itinerant preacher to remain in the same station more than three years successively, unless particular circumstances require it, and then only with consent of all the bishops.

3. The bishops point out the circuits, which are to be travelled by the presiding elders.

4. They have also, in connexion with the presiding elders,

power, in the intervals of the conferences, to change the itinerant preachers, where they conceive it necessary, and also to receive and suspend preachers, as necessity may require, until the conference.

5. They have to travel through the connexion at large, attend to the conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the societies.

6. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

7. When a bishop ceases to attend to the several conferences, and neglects to travel through the connexion at large, can he still exercise his episcopal office among us? No, unless it be that he were sick, and what the like circumstances more might be.

8. If, at any time, it should so happen, that by reason of death, suspension or other cause, our communion should be without a bishop; how is this want to be relieved? The elder, who shall have been elected to preside at the conference, in the absence of a bishop, shall perform the duties of a bishop during the sitting of the conference; he shall also attend the other conference, and take his seat with the president there elected, to act in conjunction with him at the conference then sitting; and the president there elected shall also in turn, and in like manner attend to the other conference: so that each conference may know and be acquainted with the proceedings of the others, and the love and communion be maintained &c. unto the next general conference, who are then to elect bishops anew.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at the close of every conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION AND DUTY.

Quest. How are the presiding elders to be elected?

Ans. The bishops shall propose to the conference some of the elders, who have finished their time of probation; and with the consent of the conference, elect them for four years.

Quest. What are the duties of a presiding elder?

Ans. 1. To travel through the district appointed him of the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the travelling and local preachers in his district, and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lord's supper, and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters and leaders; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the travelling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday; and where there are more of them, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result, and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order and love and seriousness in their societies.

4. He can also change the travelling preachers in his district, but he must first consult a bishop; he can further receive or suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall give the bishop notice of the condition of his district; and see that the travelling preachers obtain a proportioned part of their support quarterly, by giving them their allowance out of the money they may have collected in their districts; a single man, however, shall not be allowed more than eighty dollars, and a married man one hundred and sixty dollars: should the collection of one or the other district be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee, appointed by the conference, who, in their discretion, shall make up the deficiency out of other collections made. But a preacher stationed in a town must be supported by the congregation he attends.

6. Should it so happen, that the society at a time should be without a bishop, then the presiding elders shall, each of them, have special charge of the societies in their respective districts, that all may be kept in love and earnest together, and that they give each other all necessary information of the state of their districts. And should it also happen, that one or the other district should be without a presiding elder, what shall then be done? Information thereof shall immediately be given to the bishop, who shall appoint one of the elders in the district, where it can be done, to act till the conference. And in case there should be no bishop, then the next or nearest presiding elder shall appoint one, if he himself cannot take charge of the district.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Quest. How is an elder constituted?

Ans. After a probation of two years, he may be presented before the yearly conference and ordained of the bishops by laying on of their hands: provided the conference be convinced and fully satisfied, that the contents of the 6, 7, 8 and 9th verses of St. Paul to Titus in his first chapter, are founded to be inherent in and with him. These verses shall be read to every one, who is ordained, at his ordination.

1. What is the duty of an elder? To preach as often as he can and to baptise; to perform the office of matrimony, and assist the presiding elder to administer the Lord's supper, but when the presiding elder cannot attend, then one or two elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship, endeavour to establish and hold class-meetings, where a majority of the members conceive it necessary, and assist in electing the leaders.

2. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly, for the travelling preachers and for the poor; to take specification or catalogue thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other member, in order to account with the presiding elder, so that all things be done in an orderly manner.

3. Where a local elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no travelling preacher comes to, he shall make the collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, for the support of needy preachers, who are poor and who preach amongst poor people-

4. Should a travelling preacher or elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the presiding elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstance, he shall be accountable therefor to the next conference.

5. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, by making

a collection for their benefit amongst the societies in their district, though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to travelling preachers.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND OF THEIR DUTY.

Quest. How is a preacher to be received?

Ans. 1. By the yearly conference.

2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder, who supplies the place of a presiding elder at a yearly or great meeting, until the next sitting of the conference. No one will be admitted otherwise, than on trial; and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong, otherwise it would be no trial at all.

3. Every person proposed as preacher shall be examined by the conference, and the following questions put to him, viz.

Have you known God as a pardoning God in Christ?

Have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Is the love of God, through Christ, shed abroad in your heart?

Have you obtained peace with God?

Do you follow after holiness?

Have you a correct knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, holiness and redemption?

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart, than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace, as the brethren may think fit and expedient?

Are you willing, as much as in you lies, to assist in upholding the itinerary plan (or travelling the circuit) and to support the same as much as possible?

Qst. 2. What are the duties of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class meetings where they may be found useful; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their

souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those who are afflicted and labour under temptations; to animate the indolent or slothful, and endeavour as much as possible to edify and instruct *all* in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never to omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well ordered exemplary life.

Quest. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favourable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will bear.

Speak evil of no one; whatever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a Son in the Gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instructing and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a Bishop, a presiding elder or a preacher is under report of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God, as an unchristian practise, sufficient for excommunication?

Ans. When a bishop is accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? When charges happen to be made, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of a presiding elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to inquire into and

examine whether they are founded in truth; but, as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appears that he is justly accused, they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly conference, where the presiding elders and elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended from office.

Quest. 2. When a presiding elder is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. Where charges happen to be brought against a presiding elder, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of the next or nearest elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the bishop, another presiding elder and two elders shall be called, who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

Quest. 3. When an elder, a preacher or an exhorter is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter or a leader and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And, in the absence of the bishop or presiding elders, three elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF THE MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess that he believes the Bible to be and contain the Holy Word of

God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus; and work out his salvation with fear and trembling to the end that he may be enabled to *flee from the eternal wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavour to walk closely and lead a godly life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship and private prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk closely, as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communion with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow being, but practise love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavour to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed.*

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honour and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in the intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace—particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Amongst the members of the society the preachers shall establish one or more class-meetings, where a majority of the members may conceive it necessary; and the members, when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love to good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class the leaders should be elected in the presence of the preacher, and their duty shall be to appoint prayer-meetings, and to commence and conclude them; it shall also be their duty to hold class meetings at times, to exhort the members and preserve them in love, and to look well to their own conduct.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the fault first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear

thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a Publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the members of our society, concerning the payment of debts or other cause, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall choose the third: the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meeting, and apply to the presiding elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration, in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, excepting the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as: executors or administrators.

APPENDIX.

OF THE NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves—the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Quest. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Ans. 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of *the causes, evils and cures of heart, and church divisions.*

OF VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Quest. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is of unspeakable necessity, in order to promote confidence and communion with God among us; further to wean us of the love of the world, and inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also to encourage us to strive after and practise brotherly love, that no evil *thinking or judging* of one another be found amongst us; and lastly that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher must make it his duty to instruct the people from house to house, and exhort them to be apt in all good. Till this be done, and that in good earnest, we shall, upon the whole, be but little better, and our godliness will not be deeply enough founded; therefore, wherever we may be, we should guard against useless or loose talking.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house and exhorting the people, is founded or implied in those solemn words of the Apostle:

"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season: Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering."

OF THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Quest. What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Ans. Let him, who is in any wise zealous for God and the

souls of men, begin the work without delay. Where children are found, whose parents are in society, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them earnestly, yet simply and plain, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

1. On the day appointed, there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

2. After their names have been read aloud, the bishop shall say unto the people present:

3. *Beloved Brethren in Christ!* Is there any amongst you, who knoweth any impediment or crime in any of those persons to be ordained elders (or deacons as the case may be), for which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God and shew what the crime or impediment is.

4. If any crime or impediment be objected, the bishop shall surcease from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of the crime.

Then shall be read 1 Tim. 3.8—13.

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers; sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of *one* wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Quest. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry to serve God in the church of Christ, to the honour and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust, with the help of God.

Quest. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures old and new testament?

Ans. I do believe them.

Quest. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion

your own life according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make yourself as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Quest. Will you reverently obey them, to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

Ans. I will endeavour, through the grace of God, so to do.

Then prayer is made.

After prayer, the bishops (or bishop and elders) shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say:

“Take thou authority to execute the office of an elder (or minister) in the church of God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” Amen.

Hereupon the bishop shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:

“Take thou authority to read and preach the word of God in the church of Christ.”

Then the bishop shall read from the 12th chapter of St. Luke v. 35—38:

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh; they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Then the bishop, or one whom he appoints, shall pray. After which the following benediction is pronounced by the bishop:

The Peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING A BISHOP.

After prayer the bishop reads as follows:

Hear ye the Word of the Lord!

Matth 28. v. 18—20. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying: *All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name*

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Acts 20. v. 27—32. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own-selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified.

1 Tim. 3. v. 1—7. This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.—A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of *one* wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them, which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil.

When the gospel and epistles are read, and the discourse thereafter following ended, the bishop requires the person elected to step forth, moves the congregation to prayer, and then addresses him, who is to be ordained, as follows:

Brother! For as much as the holy scriptures command, that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to government in the church of Christ, which he hath purchased with no less price than the effusion of his own blood; therefore, before I admit you to this administration, I will question you on some certain points relative thereto.

The Bishop. Are you persuaded, that the old and new testaments contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you

determined out of the same holy scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, according to the ability, which God shall grant you, and to teach or maintain nothing, but what may be concluded and proven by the same?

Ans. Yes, I am persuaded, and will, with the help of God, do according thereto.

The Bishop. Are you willing to exercise yourself faithfully in the same holy scriptures, and to call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of them, so that you may be able to teach wholesome doctrine?

Ans. I am willing with the help of God so to do.

The Bishop. Will you, as much as in you lieth, maintain and set forth a kind and peaceable disposition towards every one, and endeavour to promote the like good will amongst others, according to the authority vested in you by the word of God?

Ans. I will so do, the Lord being my helper.

The Bishop. Will you, in ordaining, sending abroad and laying hands upon others, act faithfully and with a good conscience?

Ans. I will so do by the help of God.

Then the bishop shall say:

Almighty God, our heavenly father, grant unto you strength and power to perform all these things, that you may be found to be a true and faithful minister at the day of account, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Bishop. Let us pray.

After prayer the bishop and elders present, shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected person kneeling before them upon his knees, the bishop saying:

Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Then the bishop shall deliver him the Bible, saying:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this holy Book. Be diligent to practise them. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine. Feed the flock of Christ. Hold up the weak. Be compassionate, and administer discipline with mercy, that you may receive the crown of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Then the bishop, or one whom he appoints, shall conclude with prayer.

THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

ADDRESS.

Dear Beloved!

We are gathered together here, in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together these two persons, namely N. and N. as man and wife in the holy estate of Matrimony: which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency.

Quest. Is there any one here present, who can shew any just cause why these two persons may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

If no impediment be alledged, then shall the minister say unto the man:

N. N. wilt thou have this woman (N. N.) to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then shall the minister say unto the woman:

N. N. wilt thou have this man (N. N.) to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance? Wilt thou obey him, serve him, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then the minister shall require them to join their right hands together, and the minister shall say:

Those, whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

For as much as N. and N. have consented together in wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses present, I pronounce that they are man and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob bless this man and this woman, and sow into their hearts the seeds of eternal life, Amen.

Let us pray.

THE END.

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

HAGERS-TOWN:

PRINTED BY J. GRUBER and D. MAY.

1822.

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OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord, our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world, who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans in America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otterbein*, a *Böhm*, and a *Guething*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labour in his neglected vineyard, and call, also, amongst the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labours were blessed; they established in many places excellent societies, and led many a precious soul to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow labourers in the vineyard; for the harvest was great, and the labourers but few. The Lord called others, who also were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow labourers.

The number of members of the society, in the different parts of the country, continued from time to time to increase, and the gracious work spread itself through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Great meetings were appointed and held annually several times; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present; represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavours to save souls. At one of these conversations, it was resolved to hold a conference of all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was accordingly held in Baltimore, in the year 1789. There were present:

William Otterbein,	Adam Lehman,
Martin Bœhm,	John Ernst,
George Adam Guething,	Henry Weidener.
Christian Newcomer,	

The second conference was held in York county, in Paradise township, at the house of brother Spangler, in the year 1791, where there were present the following persons, viz.

William Otterbein,	John Ernst,
Martin Bœhm,	John G. Pfrimmer,
George Adam Guething,	John Neidig,
Christian Newcomer,	Benedict Sander,
Adam Lehman,	

And after mature deliberation, how they might labour most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such as fellow labourers, of whom they had cause to believe that they had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time the number of members continued to increase more and more; the preachers therefore were obliged to appoint an annual conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labour most usefully to one common end; for some were Presbyterians, or church Reformed, some were Lutherans, others Mennonites, and yet others were Methodists. They therefore appointed a conference to be held the 25th of September, 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland, at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. There were present as follows:

William Otterbein,	Christian Krum,
Martin Bœhm,	Henry Krum,
George Adam Guething,	John Hershey,
Christian Newcomer,	Jacob Geisinger,
Adam Lehman,	Henry Bœhm,
Abraham Dracksel,	Dietrick Aurauf.
John George Pfrimmer,	

They there united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "*The United Brethren in Christ*;" and elected William Otterbein and Martin Bœhm, as superintendants or bishops, and agreed that each of them should be at liberty to baptize in such manner, as should best accord with his conviction.

From this time forth the society increased still more; preachers

were appointed, who travelled continually (because the number of preaching places could in no other wise be attended), and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It became necessary, therefore, to appoint a conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers, who laboured in those states, to travel such a distance annually to the conference.

In the mean time brothers Bœhm and Guething died, and brother Otterbein desired, that another bishop should be elected (because infirmity and age would not permit him to superintend any longer,) who should take charge of the society, and preserve discipline and order; for at a conference formerly held, it was resolved, that whenever one of the bishops die, another should be elected in his place—Therefore brother Christian Newcomer was then elected as bishop, to take charge of the superintendance of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society has long since been deeply felt; and partial attempts thereto having at different times been made, it was at length resolved at the conference in the state of Ohio, that a general conference should be held, who should take upon themselves to complete the same, so as to accord with the word of God. The members of this conference were to be elected from amongst the preachers in the different parts of the country, by a majority of the votes of the members of the society; and there were present at the conference, that were duly elected, the following preachers, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Tracksel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, John Schneider, Henry Kumler, Henry Spade, Isaac Nighswander, Christian Krum, and Jacob Baulus.

These met on the 6th of June, 1815, near Mountpleasant, Westmoreland county, Penn. where they, after mature deliberation, found it to be necessary, good and beneficial to deliver the following Doctrines and Rules of discipline to the society in love and humility, with the sincere desire, that these doctrines and rules, together with the Word of God, might be attended to and strictly observed. For God is a God of order, and where there is no order and discipline, there all love and communion will be lost. Therefore, let us attend to the counsel of our Lord, who taught us: That in lowliness of mind, we should esteem each other better than ourselves. Seek to be minded, as Jesus Christ

also was! Who took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even unto the death of the cross, to obtain for us grace and strength, that we, from motives of love and humility, might submit one to the other. He who cannot submit himself, the same lacketh grace, love and humility; hence Jesus saith: Whoso amongst you shall desire to be the greatest, shall be the other's servant. If then we are to be the servants of each other, we must love one another. Jesus saith: Thus shall all men know that ye are my true disciples, if ye have love to one another; and whoso hath not love, the same continueth in death. Then let us practise love, that we may enjoy the glory and felicity, which Jesus obtained by prayer for his disciples of his heavenly father, that we may be *one* even as he and the father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be likeminded, unanimous and concordant; and no one speak or think evil of the other: but implore the Lord, that he would graciously grant us his spirit and an earnest desire to lead a truly christian life, to the honour and glory of his holy name, and our own eternal welfare. Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the virgin Mary, and was born of her: that he is the saviour and mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and, that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with

the father and the son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive *it* with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, as also true penitence, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We further think, that the outward means, namely: baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, are to be in use and practised in all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on his children particularly to practise them: But the manner in which, ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of each. So also the practice or example of washing the feet must remain free to the judgment of every one.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

Question. After what manner and order are the transactions of the conferences to be considered?

Answer. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Qst. How and after what manner are the members of a General conference to be chosen?

Ans. In every district the itinerant preachers, if such are present, if not, the stationed or local preachers, who live in the district, shall advise the members of the society, that they elect two elders from out of their district; but all the elders in the district, who are capable of going to the conference, shall be put in nomination, and the same made known some time previous to the election; and those two, who shall have a majority of votes,

shall be considered as members of the General conference. The votes taken at each place, shall be couched in writing, and attested by one of the preachers or leaders then and there present. The presiding elder of the district shall examine the statement, and should any two or more have an equal number of votes, he shall determine by lot, who or which of them are elected.

Qst. How often are the General conferences to be held?

Ans. Every four years.

Qst. Has the General conference any other powers, which the Annual conference has not?

Ans. Yes, the members of the General conference alone have the power to elect two bishops from amongst the elders for four years; as also to alter and amend the discipline according as they may find it necessary and expedient: provided they do not establish any article, which may tend to abolish, undo or put aside the itinerant plan. The general conference has further to fix upon or determine the districts, where the yearly conferences are to be held.

Quest. Which are the members of the yearly conference?

Ans. All the elders and preachers, who have obtained a written permit, and are, for the time being, in the district where the conference is held, or who may be taken up and acknowledged in the same.

Quest. In what manner and order are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

Ans. 1. There will be read a chapter in the Bible, and brief remarks made on the contents; there will be sung and prayer performed, and that as often as the conference sits; and the sitting closed with singing and prayer.

2. The conference elects a secretary, and in case one of the bishops be absent, also one of the presiding elders, to act in conjunction with the bishop.

3. The preachers will be examined, what their deportment towards their fellow beings is; whether their conduct in life be blameless and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote or spread the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be admitted on trial?

5. What preachers are yet to continue on trial?

6. Are any to be elected as elders?

7. Have any of the preachers died?

8. Who are the presiding elders?
9. Who gives himself up to travel?
10. What has been collected, partly for contingent expenses, and partly for making up the allowances of the travelling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? Have they received their dues?
11. When and where shall our next conference be held?
12. Are the elders ordained?
13. In what circuits are the preachers stationed this year?
14. Is there any thing more to do?
15. Has the conference appointed the districts in their circuit, for the purpose of holding the election for the members of the General conference?
16. Is all that has been transacted, entered in the protocol?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION AND CONSECRATION OF THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How are the bishops to be constituted?

Ans. The General conference shall elect them by the majority of the votes of the elders, who were elected to the General conference: But the conference may still be at liberty to retain the bishops yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as well as the bishops retained, must be capable of travelling the different circuits and of attending to the conferences, otherwise they cannot be elected. The persons thus elected shall be ordained by the laying on of the hands of our bishops and one or more elders, but if no bishop be present, then two elders shall perform the rite.

Quest. What are the duties of the bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside in our conferences.

2. They have, in conjunction with an elder, whom they select, to fix the appointments of the itinerant preachers for the several circuits, provided they shall not allow any itinerant preacher to remain in the same station more than three years successively, unless particular circumstances require it, and then only with consent of all the bishops.

3. The bishops point out the circuits, which are to be travelled by the presiding elders.

4. They have also, in connexion with the presiding elders, power, in the intervals of the conferences, to change the itinerant preachers, where they conceive it necessary, and also to receive and suspend preachers, as necessity may require, until the conference.

5. They have to travel through the connexion at large, attend to the conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the societies.

6. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

7. When a bishop ceases to attend to the several conferences, and neglects to travel through the connexion at large, can he still exercise his episcopal office among us? No, unless it be that he were sick, and what the like circumstances more might be.

8. If, at any time, it should so happen, that by reason of death, suspension or other cause, our communion should be without a bishop; how is this want to be relieved? The elder, who shall have been elected to preside at the conference, in the absence of the bishop, shall perform the duties of a bishop during the sitting of the conference; he shall also attend the other conference, and take his seat with the president there elected, to act in conjunction with him at the conference then sitting; and the president there elected shall also in turn, and in like manner attend to the other conference: so that each conference may know and be acquainted with the proceedings of the others, and that love and communion be maintained &c. unto the next general conference, who are then to elect bishops anew.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at the close of every conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION AND DUTY.

Quest. How are the presiding elders to be elected?

Ans. The bishops shall propose to the conference some of the elders, who have finished their time of probation; and with the consent of the conference, elect them for four years.

Quest. What are the duties of a presiding elder?

Ans. 1. To travel through the district appointed him of the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the travelling and local preachers in his district, and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lord's supper, and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters and leaders; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the travelling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday; and where there are more of them, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result, and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order and love and seriousness in their societies.

4. He can also change the travelling preachers in his district, but he must first consult a bishop; he can further receive or suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall give the bishop notice of the condition of his district; and see that the travelling preachers obtain a proportioned part of their support quarterly, by giving them their allowance out of the money they may have collected in their districts; a single man however, shall not be allowed more than eighty dollars, and a married man one hundred and sixty dollars, annually. Should the collection of one or the other district be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee, appointed by the conference, who, in their discretion, shall make up the deficiency out of other collections made. But a preacher stationed in a town must be supported by the congregation he attends.

6. Should it so happen, that the society at a time should be without a bishop, then the presiding elders shall, each of them, have special charge of the societies in their respective districts, that all may be kept in love and earnest together, and that they give each other all necessary information of the state of their districts. And should it also happen, that one or the other district should be without a presiding elder, what shall then be done? Information thereof shall immediately be given to the bishop, who shall appoint one of the elders in the district, where it can be done, to act till the conference. And in case there should be no bishop, then the next or nearest presiding elder shall appoint one, if he himself cannot take charge of the district.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Quest. How is an elder constituted?

Ans. After a probation of two years, he may be presented before the yearly conference and ordained of the bishops by laying on of their hands: provided the conference be convinced and fully satisfied, that the contents of the 6, 7, 8 and 9th verses of St. Paul to Titus in the first chapter, are found to be inherent in and with him. These verses shall be read to every one, who is ordained, at his ordination.

1. What is the duty of an elder? To preach as often as he can and to baptize; to perform the office of matrimony, and assist the presiding elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the presiding elder cannot attend, then one or two elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavour to establish and hold class-meetings, where a majority of the members conceive it necessary, and assist in electing the leaders.

2. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly for the travelling preachers and for the poor; to take specification or catalogue thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other member, in order to account with the presiding elder, so that all things be done in an orderly manner.

3. Where a local elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no travelling preacher comes to, he shall make the collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, for the support of needy preachers, who are poor and who preach amongst poor people.

4. Should a travelling preacher or elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the presiding elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstance, he shall be accountable therefor to the next conference.

5. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, by making a

collection for their benefit amongst the societies in their district, though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to travelling preachers.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND OF THEIR DUTY.

Quest. How is a preacher to be received?

Ans. 1. By the yearly conference.

2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder, who supplies the place of a presiding elder at a yearly or great meeting, until the next sitting of the conference. No one will be admitted otherwise, than on trial; and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong, otherwise it would be no trial at all.

3. Every person proposed as preacher shall be examined by the conference, and the following questions put to him, viz.

Have you known God as a pardoning God in Christ?

Have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Is the love of God, through Christ, shed abroad in your heart?

Have you obtained peace with God?

Do you follow after holiness?

Have you a correct knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, holiness and redemption?

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart, than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace, as the brethren may think fit and expedient?

Are you willing, as much as in you lies, to assist in upholding the itinerary plan (or travelling the circuit) and to support the same as much as possible?

Qst. 2. What are the duties of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class meetings where they may be found useful; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those who are afflicted and labour under temptations, to animate

the indolent or slothful, and endeavour as much as possible to edify and instruct *all* in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never to omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well ordered exemplary life.

Qst. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favourable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will bear.

Speak evil of no one; whatever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a Son in the Gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instructing and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a Bishop, a presiding elder or preacher is under report of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God, as an unchristian practice, sufficient for excommunication?

Ans. When a bishop is accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? When charges happen to be made, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of a presiding elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to inquire into and examine whether they are founded in truth; but,

as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appears that he is justly accused, they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly conference, where the presiding elders and elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended from office.

Quest. 2. When a presiding elder is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. Where charges happen to be brought against a presiding elder, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of the next or nearest elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the bishop, another presiding elder and two elders shall be called, who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

Quest. 3. When an elder, a preacher or an exhorter is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter or a leader and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused, shall meet and be present to each other. And, in the absence of the bishop or presiding elders, three elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF THE MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess, that he believes the Bible to be and contain the Holy Word of

God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling to the end, that he may be enabled to *flee from the eternal wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavour to walk closely and lead a godly life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship and private prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk closely, as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communion with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow being, but practise love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavour to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed.*

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in the intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace—particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Amongst the members of the society the preachers shall establish one or more class-meetings, where a majority of the members may conceive it necessary; and the members, when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love to good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class the leaders should be elected in the presence of the preacher, and their duty shall be to appoint prayer-meetings, and to commence and conclude them; it shall also be their duty to hold class-meetings at times, to exhort the members and preserve them in love, and to look well to their own conduct.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the fault first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear

thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a Publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the members of our society, concerning the payment of debts or other cause, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall choose the third: the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meeting, and apply to the presiding elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration; in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, excepting the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as: executors or administrators.

APPENDIX.

OF THE NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Quest. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Ans. 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of *the causes, evils and cures of heart, and church divisions.*

OF VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Quest. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is of unspeakable necessity, in order to promote confidence and communion with God among us; further to wean us of the love of the world, and inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also to encourage us to strive after and practise brotherly love, that no evil *thinking or judging* of one another be found amongst us; and lastly that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher must make it his duty to instruct the people from house to house, and exhort them to be apt in all good. Till this be done, and that in good earnest, we shall, upon the whole, be but little better, and our godliness will not be deeply enough founded; therefore, wherever we may be, we should guard against useless or loose talking.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house and exhorting the people, is founded or implied in those solemn words of the Apostle:

"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season: Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering."

OF THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Quest. What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Ans. Let him, who is in any wise zealous for God and the

souls of men, begin the work without delay. Where children are found, whose parents are in society, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them earnestly, yet simply and plain, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

1. On the day appointed, there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

2. After their names have been read aloud, the bishop shall say unto the people present:

3. *Beloved Brethren in Christ!* Is there any amongst you, who knoweth any impediment or crime in any of those persons to be ordained elders (or deacons as the case may be), for which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God and shew what the crime or impediment is.

4. If any crime or impediment be objected, the bishop shall surcease from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of the crime.

Then shall be read 1 Tim. 3, 8—13.

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers; sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Quest. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry to serve God in the church of Christ, to the honour and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust, with the help of God.

Quest. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures old and new testament?

Ans. I do believe them.

Quest. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion

your own life according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make yourself as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Quest. Will you reverently obey them, to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions;

Ans. I will endeavour, through the grace of God, so to do.

Then prayer is made.

After prayer, the bishops (or bishop and elders) shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say.

“Take thou authority to execute the office of an elder (or minister) in the church of God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Amen.

Hereupon the bishop shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:

“Take thou authority to read and preach the word of God in the church of Christ.”

Then the bishop shall read from the 12th chapter of St. Luke, v. 35—38:

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Then the bishop, or one whom he appoints, shall pray. After which the following benediction is pronounced by the bishop:

The Peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING A BISHOP.

After prayer the bishop reads as follows:

Hear ye the Word of the Lord!

Matth 28. v. 18—20. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying: *All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name*

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Acts 20. v. 27—32. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified.

1 Tim. 3, v. 1—7. This is a true saying: If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.—A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil.

When the gospel and epistles are read, and the discourse thereafter following ended, the bishop requires the person elected to step forth, moves the congregation to prayer, and then addresses him, who is to be ordained, as follows;

Brother! For as much as the holy scriptures command that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to government in the church of Christ, which he hath purchased with no less price than the effusion of his own blood; therefore, before I admit you to this administration, I will question you on some certain points relative thereto.

The Bishop. Are you persuaded, that the old and new testaments contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you

determined out of the same holy scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, according to the ability, which God shall grant you, and to teach or maintain nothing, but what may be concluded and proven by the same?

Ans. Yes, I am persuaded, and will with the help of God, do according thereto.

The Bishop. Are you willing to exercise yourself faithfully in the same holy scriptures, and to call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of them, so that you may be able to teach wholesome doctrine?

Ans. I am willing with the help of God so to do.

The Bishop. Will you, as much as in you lieth, maintain and set forth a kind and peaceable disposition towards every one, and endeavour to promote the like good will amongst others, according to the authority vested in you by the word of God?

Ans. I will so do, the Lord being my helper.

The Bishop. Will you, in ordaining, sending abroad and laying hands upon others, act faithfully and with a good conscience?

Ans. I will so do by the help of God.

Then the Bishop shall say:

Almighty God, our heavenly father, grant unto you strength and power to perform all these things, that you may be found to be a true and faithful minister at the day of account, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Bishop. Let us pray.

After prayer the bishop and elders present, shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected person kneeling before them upon his knees, the bishop saying:

Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then the bishop shall deliver him the Bible, saying:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this holy Book. Be diligent to practise them. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine. Feed the flock of Christ. Hold up the weak. Be compassionate, and administer discipline with mercy, that you may receive the crown of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then the bishop, or one whom he appoints, shall conclude with prayer.

THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

ADDRESS.

Dear Beloved!

We are gathered together here, in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together these two persons, namely, N. and N. as man and wife in the holy estate of Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency.

Quest. Is there any one here present, who can shew any just cause why these two persons may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

If no impediment be alleged, then shall the minister say unto the man:

N. N. wilt thou have this woman (N. N.) to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then shall the minister say unto the woman:

N. N. wilt thou have this man (N. N.) to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance? Wilt thou obey him, serve him, love, honour and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then the minister shall require them to join their right hands together, and the minister shall say:

Those, whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

For as much as N. and N have consented together in wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses present, I pronounce that they are man and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob bless this man and this woman, and sow into their hearts the seeds of eternal life. Amen.

Let us pray.

FURTHER APPENDIX

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, HELD THE 15TH DAY OF MAY,
1821, AT THE HOUSE OF DEWALD MECHLING, IN FAIR-
FIELD COUNTY, IN THE STATE OF OHIO.

1. Resolved, that the preachers in towns or cities, who stand under the direction of the conference with the itinerant preachers, shall also account at the annual conference, and limit their salaries according to their support and necessary expences; and should a surplus of their salary remain, to make a return of the same to the General conference, to be expended for the support of the itinerant preachers.

2. Resolved, that the presiding elder and preachers of each district appoint a steward, and in each class an assistant steward, to make quarterly collections in money or produce, which produce to be valued what it may be worth between man and man, and an account kept thereof, and to be proportionably distributed among the travelling preachers. All assistant stewards to submit their accounts to the steward of the district and settle with him quarter yearly; the district stewards to submit their accounts to the presiding elder at the quarterly meetings, and the presiding elder to submit the same to the Annual conference, in order to show what each travelling minister has received, and that order and equality be observed.

3. Resolved, that the presiding elders hold a conference at all quarterly meetings with the preachers and classleaders; and where a person is recommended as a preacher or exhorter, the presiding elder is to examine him in the presence of the preachers; and should he be found competent in his standing and abilities, he may permit such brother to preach or exhort; and he shall transmit his testimony and examination in writing to the Annual conference, to be by them approved or disapproved, according as they may conceive the same consonant with the honor and glory of the Supreme Being. And the presiding elder and preacher shall have power to silence an admitted brother for unchristian like behaviour before the Annual conference, if they think proper.

4. Resolved, That all slavery, in every sense of the word, be totally prohibited and in no way tolerated in our community. Should some be found therein, or others apply to be admitted as

members, who hold slaves, they can neither remain to be members or be admitted as such, provided they do not personally manumit or set free such slave, wherever the laws of the state shall permit it, or submit the case to the quarterly conference, to be by them specified, what length of time such slave shall serve his master or other person, until the amount given for him, or for raising him, be compensated to his master. But in no case shall a member of our society be permitted to sell a slave.

5. Resolved, That if any member of this society shall publicly transgress as aforesaid, such member shall likewise be publicly reprimanded, and in case such member shall not humble, the same shall be publicly excluded from the congregation.

THE END.

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN T. HANZSHE,

1826

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OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN •IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord, our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans in America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otterbein*, a *Boehm*, and a *Guething*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labour in his neglected vineyard, and call, also, amongst the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labours were blessed; they established in many places excellent societies, and led many a precious soul to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow labourers in the vineyard; for the harvest was great, and the labourers but few. The Lord called others, who also were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow labourers.

The number of members of the society, in the different parts of the country, continued from time to time to increase, and the gracious work spread itself through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Great meetings were appointed and held annually several times; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present; represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavours to save souls. At one of these conversations, it was resolved to hold a conference of all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how; and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was accordingly held in Baltimore, in the year 1789. There were present:

William Otterbein,	Adam Lehman,
Martin Boehm,	John Ernst,
George Adam Guething,	Henry Weidener,
Christian Newcomer.	

The second conference was held in York county, in Paradise township, at the house of brother Spangler, in the year 1791, where there were present the following persons, viz.

William Otterbein,	John Ernst,
Martin Boehm,	John G. Pfrimmer,
George A. Guething,	John Neidig,
Christian Newcomer,	Benedict Sander,
Adam Lehman,	

And after mature deliberation, how they might labour most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such as fellow labourers, of whom they had cause to believe that they had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time the number of members continued to increase more and more; the preachers therefore were obliged to appoint an annual conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labour most usefully to one common end; for some were Presbyterians, or church Reformed, some were Lutherans, others Mennonites, and yet others were Methodists. They therefore appointed a conference to be held the 25th of September, 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland, at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. There were present as follows:

William Otterbein,	Christian Krum,
Martin Boehm,	Henry Krum,
George Adam Guething,	John Hershey,
Christian Newcomer,	Jacob Geisinger,
Adam Lehman,	Henry Boehm,
Abraham Dracksel,	Dietrick Aurof,
John George Pfrimmer.	

They there united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "*The United Brethren in Christ*;" and elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, as superintendants or bishops and agreed that each of them should be at liberty to baptize in such manner, as should best accord with his conviction.

From this time forth the society increased still more; preachers were appointed, who travelled continually (because the number of preaching places could in no other wise be attended), and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It became necessary, therefore, to appoint a conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers, who laboured in those states, to travel such a distance annually to the conference.

In the mean time brothers Boehm and Guething died, und brother Otterbein desired, that another bishop should be elected (because infirmity and age would not permit him to superintend any longer,) who should take charge of the society and preserve discipline and order; for at a conference formerly held, it was resolved, that whenever one of the bishops die, another should be elected in his place—Therefore brother Christian Newcomer was then elected as bishop, to take charge of the superintendance of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society has long since been deeply felt; and partial attempts thereto having at different times been made, it was at length resolved at the conference in the state of Ohio, that a general conference should be held, who should take upon themselves to complete the same, so as to accord with the word of God. The members of this conference were to be elected from amongst the preachers in the different parts of the country, by a majority of the votes of the members of the society; and there were present at the conference, that were duly elected, the following preachers, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Tracksel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, John Schneider, Henry Kumler, Henry Spade, Isaac Nighswander, Christian Krum, and Jacob Baulus.

These met on the 6th of June, 1815, near Mountpleasant, Westmoreland County, Penn. where they, after mature deliberation, found it to be necessary, good and beneficial to deliver the following Doctrines and Rules of discipline to the society in love and humility, with the sincere desire, that these doctrines and rules, together with the Word of God, might be attended to and strictly observed. For God is a God of order, and where there is no order and discipline, there all love and communion will be lost. Therefore, let us attend to the counsel of our Lord, who taught us: That in lowliness of mind, we should esteem

each other better than ourselves. Seek to be minded, as Jesus Christ also was! Who took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even unto the death of the cross, to obtain for us grace and strength, that we, from motives of love and humility, might submit one to the other. He who cannot submit himself, the same lacketh grace, love and humility; hence Jesus saith: Whoso amongst you shall desire to be the greatest, shall be the other's servant. If then we are to be the servants of each other, we must love one another. Jesus saith: Thus shall all men know that ye are my true disciples, if ye have love to one another; and whoso hath not love, the same continueth in death. Then let us practise love, that we may enjoy the glory and felicity, which Jesus obtained by prayer for his disciples of his heavenly father, that we may be *one* even as he and the father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be like-minded, unanimous and concordant and no one speak or think evil of the other but implore the Lord, that he would graciously grant us his spirit and an earnest desire to lead a truly christian life, to the honour and glory of his holy name, and our own eternal welfare. Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the holy Ghost in the virgin Mary, and was born of her: that he is the saviour and mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and, that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the father and the son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive *it* with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, as also true penitence, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We are convinced that the outward means of grace, namely: baptism & the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practised by all Christian societies: and that it is incumbent on all the children of God, particularly to practise them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. So also the exemple of washing the feet is left to the judgment of every one to practise or not: but it is not becoming any of our preachers to traduce any of his brethren whose judgment and understanding in this respect are different from his own, either in public or in private; whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect shall be accounted a traducer of his brethren and shall therefore be answerable to the annual conference.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

Question. After what manner and order are the transactions of the conferences to be considered?

Answer. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Qst. How and after what manner are the members of a General conference to be chosen?

Ans. In every district the itinerant preachers, if such are present, if not, the stationed or local preachers, who live in the district, shall advise the members of the society, that they elect two elders from out of their district; but all the elders in the district, who are capable of going to the conference, shall be put in nomination, and the same made known some time previous to the election; and those two, who shall have a majority of votes, shall be considered as members of the General conference. The votes taken at each place, shall be couched in writing, and attested by one of the preachers or leaders then and there present. The presiding elder of the district shall examine the statement, and should any two or more have an equal number of votes, he shall determine by lot, who or which of them are elected.

N. B. The votes shall be taken by an exhorter, leader, or steward.

Qst. How often are the General conferences to be held?

Ans. Every four years.

Qst. Has the the General conference any other powers, which the Annual conference has not?

Ans: Yes, the members of the General conference alone have the power to elect two bishops from amongst the elders for four years; as also to alter and amend the discipline according as they may find it necessary and expedient: provided they do not establish any article, which may tend to abolish, undo or put aside the itinerant plan. The General conference has further to fix upon or determine the districts, where the yearly conferences are to be held.

Qst. Which are the members of the yearly conference?

Ans. All the elders and preachers, who have obtained a written permit, and are, for the time being, in the district where the conference is held, or who may be taken up and acknowledged in the same. But none then ordained preachers shall have a vote in the conference.

Qst. In what manner and order are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

Ans. 1. There will be read a chapter in the Bible, and brief remarks made on the contents; there will be sung and prayer performed, and that as often as the conference sits; and the sitting closed with singing and prayer.

2. The conference elects a secretary, and in case one of the

bishops be absent, also one of the presiding elders, to act in conjunction with the bishop.

N. B. Wherever it is necessary two secretaries shall be elected, and the records of the proceedings of the conference shall be kept, both in the English and German languages.

3. The preachers will be examined, what their deportment towards their fellow beings is; whether their conduct in life be blameless and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote or spread the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be admitted on trial?

5. What preachers are yet to continue on trial?

6. Are any to be elected as elders?

7. Have any of the preachers died?

8. Who are the presiding elders?

9. Who gives himself up to travel?

10. What has been collected, partly for contingent expenses, and partly for making up the allowances of the travelling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? have they received their dues?

11. When and where shall our next conference be held?

12. Are the elders ordained?

13. In what circuits are the preachers stationed this year?

14. Is there any thing more to do?

15. Has the conference appointed the districts in their circuit, for the purpose of holding the election for the members of the General conference?

16. Is all that has been transacted, entered in the protocol?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION OF THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How are the bishops to be constituted?

Ans. The General conference shall elect them by the majority of the votes of the elders, who were elected to the General conference: But the conference may still be at liberty to retain the bishops yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as well as the bishops retained, must be capable of travelling the different circuits and of attending to the conferences, otherwise they cannot be elected.

Qst. What are the duties of the bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside in our conferences.

2. They have, in conjunction with the presiding elder, that may be present at the conference, to fix the appointments of the travelling preachers for the several circuits, provided they shall not allow any itinerant preacher to remain in the same station more than three years successively, unless particular circumstances require it, and then only with consent of all the bishops.

3. The bishops point out the circuits, which are to be travelled by the presiding elders.

4. They have also, in connection with the presiding elders, power, in the intervals of the conferences, to change the itinerant preachers, where they conceive it necessary, and also to receive and suspend preachers, as necessity may require, until the conference.

5. They have to travel through the connexion at large, attend to the conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the societies.

6. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

7. When a bishop ceases to attend to the several conferences, and neglects to travel through the connexion at large, can he still exercise his episcopal office among us? No, unless it be that he were sick, and what the like circumstances more might be.

8. If at any time, it should so happen, that by reason of death, suspension or other cause, our communion should be without a bishop; how is this want to be relieved? The elder, who shall have been elected to preside at the conference, in the absence of the bishop, shall perform the duties of a bishop during the sitting of the conference; he shall also attend the other conference, and take his seat with the president there elected, to act in conjunction with him at the conference then sitting; and the president there elected shall also in turn, and in like manner attend to the other conference: so that each conference may know and be acquainted with the proceedings of the others, and that love and communion be maintained &c. unto the next General conference, who are then to elect bishops anew.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at the close of every conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION AND DUTY.

Qst. How are the presiding elders to be elected?

Ans. The bishops shall propose to the conference some of the elders, who have finished their time of probation; and with the consent of the conference, elect them for four years.

Qst. What are the duties of a presiding elder?

Ans. 1. To travel through the district appointed him of the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the travelling and local preachers in his district, and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lords supper, and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters and leaders; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the travelling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday; and where there are more of them, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result, & to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order and love and seriousness in their societies.

4. He can also change the travelling preacher in his district, but he must first consult a bishop; he can further receive or suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall give the bishop notice of the condition of his district; and see that the travelling preachers obtain a proportioned part of their support quarterly, by giving them their allowance out of the money they may have collected in their districts; a single man however, shall not be allowed more than eighty dollars, and a married man one hundred and sixty dollars, annually. Should the collection of one or the other district be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee, appointed by the conference, who, in their discretion, shall make up the deficiency out of other collections made. But a preacher stationed in a town must be supported by the congregation he attends.

6. Should it so happen, that the society at a time should be without a bishop, then the presiding elders shall, each of them, have special charge of the societies in their respective districts;

that all may be kept in love and earnest together, and that they give each other all necessary information of the state of their districts. And should it also happen, that one or the other district should be without a presiding elder, what shall then be done? Information thereof shall immediately be given to the bishop, who shall appoint one of the elders in the district, where it can be done, to act till the conference. And in case there should be no bishop, then the next or nearest presiding elder shall appoint one, if he himself cannot take charge of the district.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Qst. How is an elder constituted?

Ans. After a probation of two years, he may be presented before the yearly conference and ordained of the bishops by laying on of their hands: provided the conference be convinced and fully satisfied, that the contents of the 6, 7, 8 & 9th verses of St. Paul to Titus in the first chapter, are found to be in and with him. These verses shall be read to every one, who is ordained, at his ordination.

1. What is the duty of an elder? To preach as often as he can and to baptize; to perform the office of matrimony, and assist the presiding elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the presiding elder cannot attend, then one or two elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavour to establish and hold classmeetings, and assist in electing the leaders.

2. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly for the travelling preachers and for the poor: to take specification or catalogue thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other member, in order to account with the presiding elder, so that all things be done in an orderly manner.

3. Where a local elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no travelling preacher comes to, he shall make the collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, for the support of needy preachers, who are poor and who preach amongst poor people.

4. Should a travelling preacher or elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the presiding elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable therefor to the next conference, and shall not be entitled to any salary from the time he may have travelled during the year.

5. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, by making a collection for their benefit amongst the societies in their district though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to travelling preachers.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS AND OF THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How is a preacher to be received?

Ans. 1. By the yearly conference.

2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder, who supplies the place of a presiding elder at a yearly or great meeting, until the next sitting of the conference. No one will be admitted otherwise, than on trial; and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong, otherwise it would be no trial at all.

No preacher of any other society can be taken up as a preacher in our society, without being able to produce a recommendation of his standing and behaviour from his own society, or of some trustworthy persons, who are known as such to the conference or to the presiding elder. In such case the conference may take him on trial for one year, or in the intermediate time of the conference, the bishop or presiding elder may give him licence to preach until the next annual conference in his district.

4. Every person proposed as preacher shall be examined by the conference and the following questions put to him:

Have you known God in Christ Jesus as a sin pardoning God, and have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your soul by the holy spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and that therein only is contained the true way to our soul's salvation?

What foundation have you for such belief?

What is your motive that you desire permission to preach the gospel?

What is your knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification, and redemption?

Does your own salvation, & the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace as the brethren may think it fit or expedient.

Are you willing as much as in your power to assist in upholding the itinerant plan and support the same as much as possible.

Qst. 2. What are the duties of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class meetings; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those who are afflicted and labour under temptations, to animate the indolent or slothful, and endeavour as much as possible to edify and instruct *all* in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never to omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well ordered exemplary life.

Qst. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, & conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favourable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will bear.

Speak evil of no one; whatever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instructing and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a bishop, a presiding elder or preacher is under report of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God, as an unchristian practice, sufficient for excommunication?

Ans. When a bishop is accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? When charges happen to be made, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of a presiding elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to inquire into and examine whether they are founded in truth; but, as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appears that he is justly accused, they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly conference, where the presiding elder and elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended from office.

Qst. 2. When a presiding elder is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. Where charges happen to be brought against a presiding elder, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of the next or nearest elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers

with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the bishop, another presiding elder and two elders shall be called, who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

Qst. 3. When an elder, a preacher or an exhorter is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter or a leader and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused, shall meet and be present to each other. And, in the absence of the bishop or presiding elders, three elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF THE MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Qst. How shall members be taken into our society?

Ans. When at any meeting a person makes known his desire to become a member of our society, then the preacher present shall put to him the following question:

Have you experienced pardon of your sins and are you now determined by the grace of God to save your soul?

If the person answers this question in the affirmative, and no objection by any person on account of his moral conduct, then the preacher shall give him the hand, and he shall henceforth be esteemed a full member of our society; but so long as he is not able truly to answer the above question in the affirmative, shall he not be considered a full member, but only a seeker, and as long as he remains a seeker he has no vote in the society.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess, that he believes the Bible to be and contain the holy word of God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling to the end, that he may be enabled to *flee from the eternal wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavour to walk closely and lead a

good life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship & private prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk closely, as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communication with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow being, but practise love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavour to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed*.

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in the intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace—particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Amongst the members of the society the preachers shall establish one or more classmeetings, where a majority of the members may conceive it necessary; and the members, when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love to good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class the leaders should be elected in the presence of the preacher, and their duty shall be to appoint prayer-meetings, and to commence and conclude them; it shall also be their duty to hold class-meetings at all times, to exhort the members and preserve them in love, and to look well to their own conduct.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the faults first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a Publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the society, concerning the payment of debts or other cause, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen shall choose the third: the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meeting, and apply to the presiding elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration; in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, excepting the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as executors or administrators.

If any member of this society shall publicly transgress, such member shall likewise be publicly reprimanded, and in case such member shall not humble, the same shall be publicly excluded from the congregation.

SECTION NINTH.

IN RESPECT TO SLAVERY.

Resolved, that all slavery in every sense of the word be totally prohibited and in no way tolerated in our community.

Should some be found in our society, or others desire to be admitted as members, who hold slaves, they can neither continue to be members, or be admitted as such, without they do personally manumit or set free such slaves wherever the law of the state shall permit it, or submit the case to the quarterly conference, to be by them specified, what length of time such slave

serve his master or other person, until the amount paid for him, or for raising him, be compensated to his master. But in no case shall a member of our society be permitted to sell a slave.

SECTION TENTH.

Qst. 1. How and in what manner shall the bishops and preachers be provided for and how shall the necessary means be collected?

Ans. A collection shall annually be lifted for the bishops, at every preaching place throughout our whole society, the preachers shall pay over this collection to their respective presiding elders at the annual conference and the presiding elders shall give an account thereof to their respective annual conferences, out of this collection the bishops shall receive their salary; provided, that one who has a family does not receive more than \$160 and his travelling expenses, and if without a family, \$80 and his travelling expenses.

2d. The preachers in towns or cities, who stand under the direction of the conference with the itinerant preachers, receive their salary from the respective societies whom they serve; but it is their duty to give an account to the annual conference, and limit their salary to the usual salary and necessary expenses, and if there should be a surplus, to pay the same over to the annual conference, to be applied for the benefit of the travelling preachers.

3d. For the support of the travelling preachers the presiding elder and preachers shall appoint on each circuit a steward, and in each class an assistant steward, to make quarterly collections in money or produce, which produce to be valued what it may be worth between man and man, and an account kept thereof, and to be proportionably distributed among the travelling preachers. All assistant stewards will submit their accounts to the steward of the circuit and settle with him quarterly; the circuit stewards will submit their accounts to the presiding elder at the quarterly meeting and the presiding elder will submit his account to the annual conference, in order to show what each travelling preacher has received, that order and equality be observed. The annual salary of a travelling preacher or travelling presiding elder is also limited like the salary of the bishops to \$160, if with a family, or \$80 if without family and travelling expenses.

APPENDIX.

OF THE NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Quest. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Ans. 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other, before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of *the causes, evils and cures of heart and church divisions.*

OF VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Quest. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is of unspeakable necessity, in order to promote confidence and communion with God among us; further to wean us of the love of the world, and inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also to encourage us to strive after and practise brotherly love, that no evil *thinking or judging* of one another be found amongst us; and lastly that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher must make it his duty to instruct the people from house to house, and exhort them to be apt in all good. Till this be done, and that in good earnest, we shall, upon the whole, be but little better, and our godliness will not be deeply enough founded; therefore, wherever we may be, we should guard against useless or loose talking.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house

to house and exhorting the people, is founded or implied in those solemn words of the apostle:

“I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season: Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering.”

OF THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Qst. What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Ans. Let him, who is in any wise zealous for God and the souls of men, begin the work without delay. Where children are found, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them earnestly, yet simply and plain, that they may learn to know their Creator and redeemer in the days of their youth.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

1. On the day appointed, there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

2. After their names have been read aloud, the bishop shall say unto the people present:

3. *Beloved Brethren in Christ!* Is there any amongst you, who knoweth any impediment or crime in any of those persons to be ordained elders, for which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God and shew what the crime or impediment is.

4. If any crime or impediment be objected, the bishop shall surcease from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of the crime.

Then shall read Titum 1, 5—9:

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee.

“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly.

“For, a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, not striker, not given to filthy lucre.

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

“Holding fast the faithfull word as he had been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers,

Qst. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry to serve God in the church of Christ, to the honour and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust with the help of God.

Qst. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures old and new testament?

Ans. I do believe them.

Qst. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own life according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make yourself as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Qst. Will you reverently obey them, to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

Ans. I will endeavour, through the grace of God, so to do.

Then prayer is made.

After prayer, the bishops (or bishop and elders) shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say:

“Take thou authority to execute the office of an elder in the church of God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Amen.

Hereupon the bishop shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:

“Take thou authority to read and preach the word of God in the church of Christ.”

Then the bishop shall read from the 12th chapter of St. Luke, v. 35—38:

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he commeth and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Then the bishop, or one whom he appoints, shall pray. After which the following benediction is pronounced by the bishop:

The Peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

ADDRESS.

Dear Beloved!

We are gathered together here, in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together these two persons, namely N. and N. as man and wife in the holy estate of Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in time of man's innocency.

Qst. Is there any one here present, who can shew any just cause why these two persons may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

If no impediment be alleged, then shall the minister say unto the man:

N. N. wilt thou have this woman: (N. N.) to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then shall the minister say unto the woman:

N. N. wilt thou have this man (N. N.) to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance? Wilt thou obey him, serve him, love, honour and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live? If so, then answer: *I will.*

Then the minister shall require them to join their right hands together, and the minister shall say:

Those, whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Forasmuch as N. and N. have consented together in wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses present, I pronounce that they are man and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob bless this man and this woman, and sow into their hearts the seeds of eternal life. Amen.

Let us pray.

THE END.

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST

PUBLISHED BY JACOB ANTRIM
GERMANTOWN.

CINCINNATI:
PRINTED BY JOHN M'CALLA
1829.

OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord, our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans in America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otterbein*, a *Boehm*, and a *Guething*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labour in his neglected vineyard, and call, also, amongst the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labours were blessed; they established in many places excellent societies, and led many a precious soul to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow labourers in the vineyard; for the harvest was great, and the labourers but few. The Lord called others, who also were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow labourers.

The number of members of the society, in the different parts of the country, continued from time to time to increase, and the gracious work spread itself thro' the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Great meetings were appointed and held annually several times; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present; represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavors to save souls. At one of those conversations, it was resolved to hold a conference of all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was accordingly held in Baltimore, in the year 1789. There were present:

William Otterbein,	Adam Lehman,
Martin Boehm,	John Ernst,
George A. Guething,	Henry Weidener,
Christian Newcomer,	

The second conference was held in York county, in Paradise township, at the house of brother Spangler, in the year 1791, where there were present the following persons, viz:

William Otterbein,	John Ernst,
Martin Boehm,	John G. Pfrimmer,
Geo. A. Guething,	John Neidig,
Chris'n Newcomer,	Benedict Sander,
Adam Lehman,	

And after mature deliberation, how they might labour most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such as fellow labourers, of whom they had cause to believe that they had experienced true religion in their souls.

In the mean time the number of members continued to increase more and more; the preachers therefore were obliged to appoint an annual conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labour most usefully to one common end; for some were Presbyterians, or church reformed, some were Lutherians, others Menonites, and yet others were Methodists. They therefore appointed a conference to be held the 25th of September, 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland, at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. There were present as follows:

William Otterbein,	Christian Krum,
Martin Boehm,	Henry Krum,
George A. Guething,	John Hershey,
Christian Newcomer,	Jacob Geisinger,
Adam Lehman,	Henry Boehm,
Abraham Dracksel,	Dietrick Aurauf,
John George Pfrimmer.	

They there united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "*The United Brethren in Christ;*" and elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, as superintendants or bishops, and agreed that each of them should be at liberty to baptize in such manner, as should best accord with his conviction.

From this time forth the society increased still more; preachers were appointed, who travelled continually (because the number of preaching places could in no wise be attended,) and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It became necessary, therefore, to appoint a conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers who laboured in those states, to travel such a distance annually to the conference.

In the mean time brothers Boehm and Guething died, and brother Otterbein desired, that another bishop should be elected (because infirmity and age would not permit him to superintend any longer,) who should take charge of the society and preserve discipline and order; for at a conference formerly held, it was resolved, that whenever one of the bishops die, another should be elected in his place.—Therefore brother Christian Newcomer was then elected as bishop, to take charge of the superintendance of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society has long since been deeply felt; and partial attempts thereto having at different times been made, it was at length resolved at the conference in the state of Ohio, that a general conference should be held, who should take upon themselves to complete the same, so as to accord with the word of God. The members of this conference were to be elected from amongst the preachers in the different parts of the country, by a majority of the votes of the members of the society; and there present at the conference, that were duly elected, the following preachers, namely: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zellar, Daniel Treyer, Abraham Tracksel, Christian Berger, George Benedum, Abraham Meyer, John Schneider, Henry Kumler, Henry Spade, Isaac Nighswander, Jacob Baulus, and Christian Krum.

These met on the 6th of June, 1815, near Mountpleasant, Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, where they, after mature deliberation, found it to be necessary, good and beneficial, to deliver the following Doctrines and Rules of discipline to the society in love and humility, with the sincere desire, that these doctrines and rules, together with the Word of God, might be attended to, and strictly observed. For God is a God of order, and where there is no order and discipline, there all love and communion will be lost. Therefore, let us attend to the counsel of our Lord, who taught us: That in lowness of mind, we

should esteem each other better than ourselves. Seek to be minded, as Jesus Christ also was! Who took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even unto the death of the cross, to obtain for us grace and strength, that we, from motives of love and humility, might submit one to the other. He who cannot submit himself, the same lacketh grace, love and humility; hence Jesus saith: Whoso amongst you shall desire to be the greatest, shall be the other's servant. If then we are to be the servants of each other, we must love one another. Jesus saith: Thus shall all men know that ye are my true disciples, if ye have love to one another; and whoso hath not love, the same continueth in death. Then let us practise love, that we may enjoy the glory and felicity, which Jesus obtained by prayer for his disciples of his Heavenly Father, that we may be *one* even as he and the father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be like-minded, unanimous and concordant and no one speak or think evil of the other, but implore the Lord, that he would graciously grant us his spirit, and an earnest desire to lead a truly christian life, to the honor and glory of his holy name and our eternal welfare.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence, or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, and was born of her; that he is the saviour and mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and, that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the father and the son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive *it* with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, as also true penitence, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We are convinced that the outward means of grace, namely: baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practised by all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on all the children of God, particularly to practise them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. So also the example of washing the feet is left to the judgment of every one to practise or not; but it is not becoming any of our preachers to traduce any of his brethren whose judgment and understanding in this respect are different from his own, either in public or in private; whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect shall be accounted a traducer of his brethren and shall therefore be answerable to the annual conference.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

QUESTION. After what manner and order are the transactions of the conferences to be considered?

ANSWER. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

QUESTION. How and after what manner are the members of a General conference to be chosen?

ANSWER. In every district the itinerant preachers, if such are

present, if not, the stationed or local preachers, who live in the district, shall advise the members of the society, that they elect two elders from out of their district; but all the elders in the district, who are capable of going to the conference, shall be put in nomination, and the same made known some time previous to the election; and those two, who shall have a majority of votes, shall be considered as members of the General conference. The votes taken at each place, shall be couched in writing, and attested by one of the leaders or preachers then and there present. The presiding elder of the district shall examine the statement, and should any two or more have an equal number of votes, he shall determine by lot, who or which of them are elected.

N. B. The votes shall be taken by an exhorter, leader, or steward.

QUESTION. How often are the General conferences to be held?

ANSWER. Every four years.

QUESTION. Has the General conference any other powers, which the annual conference has not?

ANS. Yes, the members of the General conference alone have the power to elect two bishops from amongst the elders for four years; as also to alter and amend the discipline according as they may find it necessary and expedient: provided they do not establish any article, which may tend to abolish, undo or put aside the itinerant plan. The general conference has further to fix upon or determine the districts, where the yearly conferences are to be held.

QST. Which are the members of the yearly conference?

ANS. All the elders and preachers, who have obtained a written permit, and are, for the time being, in the district where the conference is held, or who may be taken up and acknowledged in the same. But none then ordained preachers shall have a vote in the conference.

QST. In what manner and order are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

ANS. There will be read a chapter in the Bible, and brief remarks made on the contents; there will be sung and prayer performed, and that as often as the conference sits; and the sitting closed with singing and prayer.

2. The Conference elects a secretary, and in case one of the bishops be absent, also one of the presiding elders, to act in conjunction with the bishop.

N. B. Wherever it is necessary two secretaries shall be elected, and the records of the proceedings of the conference shall be kept, both in the English and German languages.

3. The preachers will be examined, what their deportment towards their fellow beings is; whether their conduct in life be blameless, and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote or spread the kingdom of God.

4. What preachers are to be admitted on trial?

5. What preachers are to continue on trial?

6. Are any to be elected as elders?

7. Have any of the preachers died?

8. Who are the presiding elders?

9. Who gives himself up to travel?

10. What has been collected, partly for contingent expenses, and partly for making up the allowances of the travelling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? Have they received their dues?

11. When and where shall our next conference be held?

12. Are the elders ordained?

13. In what circuits are the preachers stationed this year?

14. Is there any thing more to do?

15. Has the conference appointed the districts in their circuit, for the purpose of holding the election for the members of the General conference?

16. Is all that has been transacted, entered in the protocol?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION OF THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

QST. How are the bishops to be constituted?

ANS. The General conference shall elect them by the majority of the votes of the elders, who were elected to the General conference: But the conference may still be at liberty to retain the bishops yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as well as the bishops retained, must be capable of travelling the different circuits and of attending to the conferences, otherwise they cannot be elected.

QST. What are the duties of the bishops?

ANS. 1. To preside in our conferences.

2. They have, in conjunction with the presiding elder, that

may be present at the conference, to fix the appointments of the travelling preachers for the several circuits, provided they shall not allow any itinerant preacher to remain in the same station more than three years successively, unless particular circumstances require it, and then only with consent of all the bishops.

3. The bishops point out the circuits, which are to be travelled by the presiding elders.

4. They have also, in connexion with the presiding elders, power, in the intervals of the conferences, to change the itinerant preachers, where they conceive it necessary, and also to receive and suspend preachers, as necessity may require, until the conference.

5. They have to travel through the connexion at large, attend to the conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the societies.

6. It is incumbent on them to perform the rights of ordination.

7. When a bishop ceases to attend to the several conferences, and neglects to travel through the connexion at large, can he still exercise his episcopal office among us? No, unless it be that he were sick, and what the like circumstances more might be.

8. If at any time, it should so happen, that by reason of death, suspension or other cause, our communion should be without a bishop; how is this want to be relieved? The elder, who shall have been elected to preside at the conference, in the absence of the bishops, shall perform the duties of a bishop during the sitting of the conference; he shall also attend the other conference, and take his seat with the president there elected, to act in conjunction with him at the conference then sitting; and the president there elected, shall also in turn, and in like manner attend to the other conference: so that each conference may know, and be acquainted with the proceedings of the other, and that love and communion be maintained &c. until the next General conference, who are then to elect bishops anew.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at the close of every conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION AND DUTY.

QST. How are the presiding elders to be elected?

ANS. The bishops shall propose to the conference some of the elders, who have finished their time of probation; and with the consent of the conference, elect them for four years.

QST. What are the duties of a presiding elder?

ANS. 1. To travel through the district appointed him of the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the travelling and local preachers in his district, and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lord's supper, and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters and leaders; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the travelling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday; and where there are more of them, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result, and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order and love and seriousness in their societies.

4. He can also change the travelling preacher in his district, but he must first consult a bishop; he can further receive or suspend preachers till the conference.

5. He shall give the bishop notice of the condition of his district; and see that the travelling preachers obtain a proportioned part of their support quarterly, by giving them their allowance out of the money they may have collected in their districts; a single man, however, shall not be allowed more than eighty dollars, and a married man one hundred and sixty dollars, annually. Should the collection of one or the other district be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee, appointed by the conference, who, in their discretion, shall make up the deficiency out of other collections made. But a preacher stationed in a town must be supported by the congregation he attends.

6. Should it so happen, that the society at a time should be without a bishop, then the presiding elders shall, each of them, have special charge of the societies in their respective districts,

that all may be kept in love and earnest together, and that they give each other all necessary information of the state of their districts. And should it also happen, that one or the other district should be without a presiding elder, what shall then be done? Information thereof shall immediately be given to the bishop, who shall appoint one of the elders in the district, where it can be done, to act till the conference. And in case there should be no bishop, then the next or nearest presiding elder shall appoint one, if he himself cannot take charge of the district.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION, AND DUTY.

Qst. How is an elder constituted?

ANS. After a probation of two years, he may be presented before the yearly conference and ordained of the bishops by laying on of their hands: provided the conference be convinced and fully satisfied, that the contents of the 6, 7, 8 & 9th verses of St. Paul to Titus in the first chapter, are found to be in and with him. These verses shall be read to every one, who is ordained, at his ordination.

1. What are the duties of an elder? To preach as often as he can and to baptize; to perform the office of matrimony, and assist the presiding elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the presiding elder cannot attend, then one or two elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavor to establish and hold classmeetings, and assist in electing the leaders.

2. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly for the travelling preachers and for the poor; to take specification or catalogue thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other member, in order to account with the presiding elder, so that all things be done in an orderly manner.

3. Where a local elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no travelling preacher comes to, he shall make the collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, for the support of needy preachers, who are poor and who preach amongst poor people.

4. Should a travelling preacher or elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the presiding elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable therefor to the next conference, and shall not be entitled to any salary from the time he may have travelled during the year.

5. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, by making a collection for their benefit amongst the societies in their district though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to travelling preachers.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND THEIR DUTY.

QST. How is a preacher to be received?

ANS. 1. By the yearly conference.

2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder, who supplies the place of a presiding elder at a yearly or great meeting, until the next sitting of the conference. No one will be admitted otherwise, than on trial; and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong, otherwise it would be no trial at all.

No preacher of any other society can be taken up as a preacher in our society, without being able to produce a recommendation of his standing and behaviour from his own society, or of some trustworthy persons, who are known as such to the conference, or to the presiding elder. In such case the conference may take him on trial for one year, or in the intermediate time of the conference, the bishop or presiding elder may give him license to preach until the next annual conference in his district.

4. Every person proposed as a preacher shall be examined by the conference and the following questions put to him:

Have you known God in Christ Jesus as a sin pardoning God, and have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your soul by the holy spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and that therein only is contained the true way to our soul's salvation?

What foundation have you for such belief?

What is your motive that you desire permission to preach the gospel?

What is your knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification and redemption?

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your bretheren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace, as the brethren may think it fit or expedient?

Are you willing as much as in your power, to assist in upholding the itinerant plan, and support the same as much as possible?

QST. 2. What are the duties of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class meetings; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those who are afflicted and labour under temptations, to animate the indolent or slothful, and endeavor as much as possible to edify and instruct *all* in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never to omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well ordered exemplary life.

QST. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favorable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will bear.

Speak evil of no one; whatever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instructing and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a bishop, a presiding elder or preacher is under report of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God, as an unchristian practice, sufficient for excommunication?

Ans. When a bishop is accused of immoral conduct, how shall he be dealt with? When charges happen to be made, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of a presiding elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to enquire into and examine whether they are founded in truth; but, as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appears that he is justly accused they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and the accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two presiding elders and three elders. If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly conference, where the presiding elder and elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended from office.

Qst. 2. When a presiding elder is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. Where charges happen to be brought against a presiding elder, which are prejudicial to the gospel, it shall be the duty of the next or nearest elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers

with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the bishop, another presiding elder and two elders shall be called, who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

Qst. 3. When an elder, a preacher or an exhorter is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter or leader and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused, shall meet and be present to each other. And, in the absence of the bishop or presiding elders, three elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF THE MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Qst. How shall members be taken into our society?

Ans. When at any meeting a person makes known his desire to become a member of our society, then the preacher present shall put to him the following question:

Have you experienced pardon of your sins and are you now determined by the grace of God to save your soul?

If the person answers this question in the affirmative, and no objection by any person on account of his moral conduct, then the preacher shall give him the hand, and he shall henceforth be esteemed a full member of our society; but so long as he is not able truly to answer the above question in the affirmative, shall he not be considered a full member, but only a seeker, and as long as he remains a seeker, he has no vote in the society.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess that he believes the Bible to be and contain the holy word of God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling to the end, that he may be enabled to *flee from the eternal wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavour to walk closely and lead a good

life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship and private prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk closely, as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communication with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow being, but practice love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavor to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed*.

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in the intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace—particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Amongst the members of the society the preachers shall establish one or more classmeetings, where a majority of the members may conceive it necessary; and the members, when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love to good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class the leaders should be elected in the presence of the preacher, and their duty shall be to appoint prayer meetings, and to commence and conclude them; it shall also be their duty to hold classmeetings at all times, to exhort the members and preserve them in love, and to look well to their own conduct.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the faults first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but

if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the society, concerning the payment of debts or other causes, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter to be chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall choose the third: the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meeting, and apply to the presiding elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration; in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded from the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, excepting the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as executors or administrators.

If any member of this society shall publicly transgress, such member shall likewise be publicly reprimanded, and in case such member shall not humble, the same shall be publicly excluded from the congregation.

SECTION NINTH.

IN RESPECT TO SLAVERY.

Resolved, that all slavery in every sense of the word be totally prohibited and in no way tolerated in our community.

Should some be found in our society, or others desire to be admitted as members, who hold slaves, they can neither continue to be members, or be admitted as such, without they do personally manumit or set free such slaves wherever the law of the

state shall permit it, or submit the case to the quarterly conference, to be by them specified, what length of time such slave shall serve his master or other person, until the amount paid for him, or for raising him, be compensated to his master. But in no case shall a member of our society be permitted to sell a slave.

SECTION TENTH.

Qst. 1. How and in what manner shall the bishops and preachers be provided for, and how shall the necessary means be collected?

Ans. A collection shall annually be lifted for the bishops, at every preaching place throughout our whole society, the preachers shall pay over this collection to their respective presiding elders at the annual conference and the presiding elders shall give an account thereof to their respective annual conferences, out of this collection the bishops shall receive their salary; provided, that one who has a family does not receive more than \$160 and his travelling expenses, and if without a family, \$80 and his travelling expenses.

2d. The preachers in towns or cities who stand under the direction of the conference with the itinerant preachers, receive their salary from the respective societies whom they serve; but it is their duty to give an account to the annual conference, and limit their salary to the usual salary and necessary expenses, and if there should be a surplus, to pay the same over to the annual conference, to be applied for the benefit of the travelling preachers.

3d. For the support of the travelling preachers the presiding elder and preachers shall appoint on each circuit a steward, and in each class an assistant steward, to make quarterly collections in money or produce, which produce to be valued what it may be worth between man and man, and an account kept thereof, and to be proportionably distributed among the travelling preachers. All assistant stewards will submit their accounts to the steward of the circuit and settle with him quarterly; the circuit stewards will submit their accounts to the presiding elder at the quarterly meeting and the presiding elder will submit his account to the annual conference, in order to show what each travelling preacher has received, that order and equality be observed. The annual salary of a travel-

DOCTRINE

AND

DISCIPLINE

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

HARRISBURG, PA.
PRINTED BY J. & F. WYETH.
1833.

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ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past it pleased the Lord, our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans of America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otter-bein*, a *Boehm*, and a *Guething*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labor in his neglected vineyard, and call, amongst the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labours were blessed; they established in many places excellent societies, and led many a precious soul to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow labourers in the vineyard; for the harvest was great, and the labourers but few. The Lord called others, who were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow labourers.

The number of members of the society, in the different parts of the country, continued from time to time to increase, and the gracious work spread itself through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Great meetings were appointed and held annually several times; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present, represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavours to save souls. At one of these conversations, it was resolved to hold a conference of all the preachers in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was accordingly held in Baltimore, in the year 1789.—There were present:

William Otterbein,
 Martin Boehm,
 George A. Guething,
 Christian Newcomer.

Adam Lehman,
 John Ernst,
 Henry Weidener,

The second conference was held in York county, in Paradise township, at the house of brother Spangler, in the year 1791, where there were present the following persons, viz.

William Otterbein,
 Martin Boehm,
 George A. Guething,
 Christian Newcomer,
 Adam Lehman.

John Ernst,
 John G. Pfrimmer
 John Neidig,
 Benedict Sander,

And after mature deliberation, how they might labour most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such as fellow labourers, of whom they had cause to believe that they had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time the number of members continued to increase and the preachers were obliged to appoint an annual conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labour more usefully to one common good: for some were Presbyterians, or church Reformed, some were Lutherians, others Mennonites, and yet others were Methodists. They therefore appointed a conference to be held the 25th of September, 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland, at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. There were present as follows:

William Otterbein,
 Martin Boehm,
 George A. Guething,
 Christian Newcomer,
 Adam Lehman,
 Abraham Dracksel,
 John G. Pfrimmer.

Christian Krum,
 Henry Krum,
 John Hershey,
 Jacob Geisinger,
 Henry Boehm,
 Dietrick Aurauf,

There they united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "*The United Brethren in Christ*;" and elected William Otterbein & Martin Boehm, as superintendants or bishops and agreed that each of them should be at liberty to baptize in such manner, as should best accord with his conviction.

From this time the society increasing still more, preachers were appointed who traveled continually (because the number of

preaching places could in no other wise be attended to;) and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It became necessary to appoint a conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers, who laboured in those states, to travel such a distance annually to the conference.

In the mean time brothers Boehm and Guething died, and brother Otterbein desired, that another bishop should be elected (because infirmity and age would not permit him to superintend any longer,) who should take charge of the society and preserve discipline and order; for at a conference formly held, it was resolved that whenever one of the bishops die, another should be elected in his place—Therefore brother Christian Newcomer was elected as bishop, to take charge of the superintendance of the society.

The want of a discipline in the society has long since been deeply felt; and partial attempts thereto having at different times been made, it was resolved at the conference held in the state of Ohio, that a general conference should be held, who should take upon themselves to complete the same, so as to accord with the word of God. The members of this conference were to be elected from amongst the preachers in the different parts of the country, by a majority of the votes of the members of the society; and there were present at the conference, that were duly elected, the following preachers, namely; Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Tracksel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, John Schneider, Henry Kumler, Henry G. Spayth, Isaac Nighswander, Christian Krum and Jacob Baulus.

These met on the 6th of June 1815, near Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania. Where they after mature deliberation, presented to their brethren, the following doctrine and discipline with the sincere desire that these doctrines and rules, *with the word of God*, should be observed. God is a God of order, but where there is no order nor church discipline the spirit of love and charity will soon be lost.

Therefore, brethren, we beseech you follow the example of our Lord. As it is written, be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Let the mind be in you which was in Christ, who took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself & became obedient unto

death, even the death of the cross, that by his grace we may submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God. He who will not submit, is in want of humble love; Jesus said, whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another, and whoso loveth not, abideth in death. Let us walk in newness of life, that the prayer of our Lord may be answered in us; that we may be one in him, and that he may give us the glory, which he gave to his disciples, that we may be one even as he and the Father. Therefore beloved brethren, let us strive to be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, let no one speak or think evil of his brother, but pray God that he may grant us his spirit, and an earnest desire to lead a truly devoted life, to the honor and glory of his holy name. AMEN.

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, & furthermore sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the holy Ghost in the virgin Mary, and was born of her: that he is the saviour and mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the father and the son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new Testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We believe that the ordinances, namely: baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practised by all Christian societies: and that it is incumbent on all the children of God, particularly, to practice them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. So also the example of washing the feet is left to the judgment of every one to practice or not; but it is not becoming any of our preachers to traduce any of his brethren whose judgment and understanding in this respect are different from his own, either in public or in private; whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect shall be accounted a traducer of his brethren and shall therefor be answerable to the annual conference.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

Question. After what manner and order are the transactions of the conferences to be considered?

Answer. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Qst. How and in what manner are the members of the general Conference elected?

Ans. It shall be the duty of each annual conference, preceding the general conference, to nominate not less than four elders, (who have stood in that capacity for a period of two years at least,) as candidates; two of which number shall be elected by the brethren within the bounds of each conference. And for the better regulation, it shall be the duty of the said conferences (at

the same time) to nominate and elect two individuals, to whom the several election accounts, as taken in each society, shall be sent by the class leaders, or preachers, whose duty it shall be immediately after the annual conference, to hand each class a list of the candidates thus nominated for election; moreover, when all the returns are received by the individuals thus appointed, it shall be their duty in the presence of a third individual, to open and count all the votes, after which the two candidates who may have the majority, shall receive immediate information of their election, in writing, from the individuals as above appointed. Should any two or more of the candidates have an equal number of votes, the individuals thus appointed, shall determine by lot who or which of them is elected.

N. B. The votes shall be taken by an exhorter, leader, or steward.

Qst. How often are the General conferences to be held.

Ans. Every four years.

Qst. Has the General conference any other power, which the Annual conference has not?

Ans. The General conference has the power alone to elect one or more Bishops, from among the elders for a period of four years, furthermore to adopt such rules as may be necessary for the better interest of the society in general. Yet, nothing shall be done by the said conference, which would in any wise affect or change the article of faith, neither the spirit, intent, or meaning of the rules or discipline as they now stand. The General conference has to determine the districts and bounds of the yearly conferences.

Qst. Who are the members of the yearly conference?

Ans. All the elders and licentiate preachers, who are for the time being in the district where the conference is held; but when such licentiate preachers are proposed for ordination, the elders only shall determine the same by their vote.

Qst. In what manner and order are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

Ans. 1. A portion of scripture shall be read at the opening of the conference, also singing and prayer, the latter of which shall be performed during the sitting and adjournment of the same.

2. The conference also elect two secretaries, one for the german and one for the english records, wherever it may be considered necessary.

3. The preachers will be examined, what their deportment

towards their fellow beings is, whether their conduct in life be blameless, and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote the kingdom of God.

4. Have any of the preachers died in the last year?
5. Who are the candidates for the Ministry?
6. What preachers are yet to continue on trial.
7. Are any to be ordained to the office of an elder?
8. Who is willing to travel the ensuing year without reserve?
9. Who are the presiding elders?
10. What has been collected, partly for contingent expenses, and partly for making up the allowances of the traveling preachers? Has reckoning been made with them? have they received their dues?
11. When and where shall our next conference be held?
12. In what circuits are the different preachers placed?
13. Is there any thing more to do?
14. Is all that has been transacted entered upon record?

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE ELECTION OF THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How are the Bishops to be elected?

Ans. The General conference shall elect them by a majority of votes, yet the conference may at their option retain the former Bishop or Bishops, yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as those retained, must be capable of attending the conferences appointed them, otherwise they cannot be elected.

Qst. What are the duties of the Bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside in our conferences-

2. They have, in conjunction with the presiding elder that may be present at the conference, to fix the appointments of the traveling preachers for the several circuits, provided they shall not allow any itinerant preachers to remain in the same station more than three years successively, unless particular circumstances require it, and then only with the consent of the conference.

3. The bishops point out the circuits which are to be traveled by the presiding elders.

4. They have also, in connection with the presiding elders, power, in the intervals of the conferences, to change the itiner-

ant preachers where they conceive it necessary, and also receive and suspend preachers as necessity may require, until the ensuing conference.

5. They have to attend the conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the societies.

6. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

7. When a Bishop ceases or neglects to attend the several conferences committed to his charge, can he be suffered to retain his office? No, unless it be through sickness or some other unavoidable circumstance.

8. If at any time, it should so happen, that by reason of death, suspension or other cause, our society should be without a bishop; how is this want to be relieved? The elder, who shall have been elected to preside at the conference, in the absence of the bishop, shall perform the duties of a bishop during the sitting of the conference; he shall also attend the other conference, and take his seat with the president there elected, to act in conjunction with him at the conference then sitting; and the president there elected shall also in turn and in like manner attend to the other conference: so that each conference may know and be acquainted with the proceedings of the others, and that love and communion be maintained &c. until the next general conference when and where, one or more Bishops shall be elected.

9. It shall be the duty of the bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at the close of every conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE PRESIDING ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION AND DUTY.

Qst. How are the presiding elders elected?

Ans. The bishops shall propose to the conference some of the elders, who have finished their time of probation; and with the consent of the conference, elect them for one year.

Qst. What are the duties of a presiding elder.

Ans. 1. To travel through the district appointed him by the bishops, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the traveling and local preachers

in his district and see that they conduct themselves agreeably to the gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and great meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lords supper, and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters and leaders; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the traveling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday: and where there are more of them, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result, and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order and love and seriousness in the societies.

4. He can also change the traveling preacher in his district, he can further receive and suspend preachers till the conference.

5. And should it so happen that a district should be without a presiding elder, information thereof shall immediately be given to the Bishop, who will appoint an elder in the district, to act as presiding elder till conference, and in the absence of the presiding elder, at any quarterly meeting, or conference, an elder present shall perform the duty of the presiding elder.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Qst. How is an elder constituted?

Ans. 1. After a probation of three years, a preacher may be presented to the yearly conference, for consideration, and if on examination by the conference, he should be chosen to be an elder, he may, by the imposition of hands, be ordained by a Bishop and two elders.

2. What is the duty of an elder?—To preach as often as he can and to baptize; and assist the presiding elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the presiding elder cannot attend, then one or two elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavour to establish and hold class meetings, and assist in electing the leaders.

3. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly, for the traveling preachers and for the poor; to take specification thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other mem-

ber, in order to account with the presiding elder, so that all things be done in an orderly manner.

4. Where a local elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no traveling preacher comes to, he shall make a collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the presiding elder or to the conference, for the support of needy preachers who preach amongst poor people.

5. Should a traveling preacher or elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the presiding elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable therefor to the next conference, and shall not be entitled to any salary for the time he may have traveled during the year.

6. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, and by making a collection for their benefit amongst the societies in their district, though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to traveling preachers.

SECTION SIXTH.

OF THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How is a preacher to be received?

Ans. 1. By the yearly conference.

2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or the presiding elder of the district, or an elder, who supplies the place of a presiding elder at a great meeting, until the next sitting of the conference. No one will be admitted otherwise, than on trial; and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong, otherwise it would be no trial.

3. No preacher of any other society can be taken up as a preacher in our society, without being able to produce a recommendation of his standing and behaviour from his own society, or of some trust-worthy persons, who are known as such to the conference or to the presiding elder. In such case the conference

may take him on trial for one year, or in the intermediate time of the conference, the bishop or presiding elder may give him licence to preach until the next annual conference in his district.

4. Every person proposed as a preacher shall be examined by the conference and the following questions put to him:

Have you known God in Christ Jesus as a sin pardoning God, and have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your soul by the holy spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and that therein only is contained the true way to our soul's salvation?

What foundation have you for such belief?

What is your motive that you desire permission to preach the gospel? What is your knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification, and redemption?

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace as the brethren may think it expedient.

Are you willing as much as in your power to assist in upholding the itinerant plan and support the same as much as possible.

Qst. 2. What are the duties of a preacher.

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class meetings; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those that are afflicted and labour under temptations, to animate the indolent, and endeavor as much as possible to edify and instruct all in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well ordered and exemplary life.

Qst. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher.

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be, *Holiness to the Lord*.—Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favourable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will admit.

Speak evil of no one; whatsoever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instruction and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION SEVENTH.

OF THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a bishop, presiding elder, or preacher is reported of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God.

Ans. When a bishop is thus accused, it shall be the duty of a presiding elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to inquire into and examine whether they are found in truth; but, as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appears that he is justly accused, they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two presiding elders and three elders.—If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly conference, where the presiding elder and elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended from office.

Qst. 2. When a presiding elder is thus accused.

Ans. It shall be the duty of the next or nearest elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in

writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the bishop, another presiding elder and two elders shall be called who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

Qst. 3. When an elder or preacher is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter or a leader and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused, shall meet and be present to each other. And, in the absence of the bishop or presiding elder, three elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

SECTION EIGHTH.

OF THE MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Qst. How shall members be taken into our society?

Ans. When at any meeting a person makes known his desire to become a member of our society, then the preacher present shall put to him the following question:

Have you experienced the pardon of your sins and are you now determined by the grace of God to save your soul?

If the person answers the question in the affirmative, and no objection made by any member, on account of his, or her, moral conduct, then the preacher will give his right hand to such, as members of our society, and with consent of the person, the preacher will record his or her name on the class book, but so long as any member can not answer the above question in the affirmative, such will have no vote in the society.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess that he believes the Bible to be and contain the holy word of God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling, to the end that he may be enabled to *flee from the wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavour to lead a good life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship and prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communication with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow beings, but practise love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavor to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed*.

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace—particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Amongst the members of the society the preachers shall establish one or more class-meetings, and the members, when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love of good works in Christ Jesus.

In every class the leader should be elected in presence of the preacher, and it is his duty to appoint prayer and class meetings, to commence and conclude the same; the freedom of our prayer and class meetings shall extend to any sincere and well disposed person or persons, who may desire to attend them, although such persons be not members of our society.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the faults first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but

if he neglect to hear the church; let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a Publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the society, concerning the payment of debts or other cause, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall choose the third; the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meeting, and apply to the presiding elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration; in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded from the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, except the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as executors or administrators, or when a member is in danger of suffering an unexpected loss of property, which will allow him immediate legal process.

If any member of this society shall publicly transgress, such member shall likewise be publicly reprimanded, and in case such member shall not humble, the same shall be publicly excluded from the congregation.

SECTION NINTH.

IN RESPECT TO SLAVERY.

Resolved, that all slavery in every sense of the word be totally prohibited and in no way tolerated in our community.

Should some be found in our society, or others desire to be admitted as members, who hold slaves, they can neither continue

to be members, or be admitted as such, without they do personally manumit or set free such slaves wherever the law of the state shall permit it, or submit the case to the quarterly conference, to be by them specified what length of time such slave shall serve his master or other person, until the amount paid for him, or for raising him, be compensated to his master. But in no case shall a member of our society be permitted to sell a slave.

SECTION TENTH.

Qst. 1. How and in what manner shall the bishops and preachers be provided for and how shall the necessary means be collected?

Ans. A collection shall annually be lifted for the bishops, at every preaching place throughout our whole society, the preachers shall pay over this collection to their respective presiding elders at the annual conference, and the presiding elders shall give an account thereof to their respective annual conferences; out of this collection the bishops shall receive their salary; provided, that one who has a family does not receive more than \$160 and his traveling expenses, and if without a family, \$80 and his traveling expenses.

2d. The preachers in towns or cities, who stand under the direction of the conference with the itinerant preachers, receive their salary from the respective societies whom they serve; but it is their duty to give an account to the annual conference, and limit their salary to the usual salary and necessary expenses, and if their should be a surplus, to pay the same over to the annual conference, to be applied for the benefit of the traveling preachers.

3d. For the support of the traveling preachers the presiding elder and preachers shall appoint in each class a steward, to make quarterly collections in money or produce, which produce to be valued what it may be worth between man and man, and an account kept thereof, and proportionably distributed among the traveling preachers. All stewards will submit their accounts to the presiding elder at the quarterly meeting, and the presiding elder will submit his account to the annual conference, in order to show what each traveling preacher has received, that order and equality be observed. The annual salary of a traveling preacher or traveling presiding elder is also limited like the

salary of the bishops to \$160, if with a family, or \$80, if without family, and traveling expenses.

4. Yet when a traveling preacher has a family of children, the yearly conference of which he is a member, will in that case grant him such an allowance in addition to that above stated, as in their judgment will accord with the wants of said preacher's family.

5. Should the collection of any one district be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee appointed by the conference, who will as they may find it advisable, make up such deficiency, out of other collections made.

6. *Resolved*, that the presiding elders shall receive pay only in proportion to the time they may actually have traveled.

APPENDIX.

OF THE NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Qst. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Ans. 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other, before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of *the causes, evils and cures of heart and church divisions.*

OF VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Qst. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is necessary in order to promote confidence and communion with

God among us; further to wean us from the love of the world, and inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also to encourage us to strive after and practice brotherly love, that no evil *thinking or judging* of one another be found among us; and lastly that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher should make it his duty to instruct the people on every occasion, both public and private, and exhort them to be diligent in all good works and doctrine. Until this be done, and that in sincerity, we shall upon the whole, be of little use, and our good shall be evil spoken of, therefore wherever we may be, we should guard against useless and idle conversation.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house, and exhorting the people, is found or implied in these solemn words of the apostle:

“I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the Word; be instant in season, and out of season; Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering.”

OF THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Qst. What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Ans. Let him, who is in any wise zealous for God and the souls of men, begin the work without delay. Where children are found, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them earnestly, yet simply and plainly, that they may learn to know their Creator & Redeemer in the days of their youth.

THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

1. On the day appointed, there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

2. After their names have been read aloud, the bishop or elder shall say unto the people present:

3. *Beloved Brethren in Christ!* Is there any among you, who know any impediment or crime in any of those persons to be ordained elders, for which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God and show what the crime or impediment may be.

4. If any crime or impediment be alleged, the bishop shall cease from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of said crime.

5. If no accusation be alleged, the Bishop, or elder, shall read the following articles, to any and all who may be chosen for ordination.

“For an elder must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate:

“Holding fast the faithful word as he had been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

Qst. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry, to serve God in the church of Christ, to the honor and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust with the help of God.

Qst. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures, old and new testament?

Ans. I do believe them:

Qst. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own life according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make yourself, as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Qst. Will you obey them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

Ans. I will endeavor, through the grace of God, so to do.

Then prayer is made.

After prayer the bishop and elder shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say:

“Take authority to execute the office of an elder in the church of God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.” Amen.

Hereupon the bishop or elder shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:

“Take authority to read and preach the word of God in the church of Christ”

Then the Bishop or elder shall read from the 12th chapter of St. Luke, 35-38:

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he

will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Then the bishop, or elder shall pray. After which the following benediction is pronounced.

The Peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

THE FORM TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGE.

ADDRESS.

We are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together N. and M. as man and wife. If any person present know any just cause or impediment why these two persons should not be joined in marriage they will now speak or for ever hereafter hold their peace.

If no impediment be alleged, then shall the minister say unto the man.

N. N. Wilt thou have this woman M. M. to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love, honor and comfort her, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live; If so, then answer yes.

Then shall the Minister say unto the woman.

M. M. Wilt thou have this man N. N. to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance, wilt thou love, honor and obey him, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live; If so, then answer yes.

Then the Minister shall require them to join their right hands together and say.

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. In as much as N. and M. have consented together in marriage and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses, I pronounce them man and wife, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.—Amen.

OATH OF PURGATION.

We, the United Brethren in Christ, Do believe, that the practise of swearing, either by the Bible, or in the name of Almighty God, is, in our opinion, contrary to the word of our Lord Christ Jesus, who says, "swear not at all," and that the mode of testifying to the Truth, when thereto required so to do in a legal form, by way of affirmation, is on us solemnly, conscienciously and fully binding before God and man to tell the truth, the whole truth & nothing but the truth.

HOW TO RECEIVE AN EXHORTER.

Any Brother desiring license to exhort, will first make it known to the class leader, and the class leader will procure a recommendation from the class of which the applicant is a member at the time, upon which the presiding elder with the advice of the quarterly conference will license the brother.

RESPECTING BOOK PRINTING.

Resolved, that none of our members, either preachers or laymen, shall be permitted to become the author of a Doctrinal Book, or Pamphlet, in a printed form, without the approbation of the annual conference or a select committee by them chosen.

THE VENDING AND DISTILLATION OF ARDENT SPIRITS

Should any Exhorter, Preacher, or Elder, from and after the next annual conferences in 1834, be engaged in the distillation or vending of ardent spirits, he shall for the first and second offence be accountable to the quarterly or yearly conference, of which he is a member; said conferences will in meekness admonish the offending brother to desist from the distillation or vending of ardent spirits, as the case may be; should these friendly admonitions fail, and the party continue to act in the same and it be proven to the satisfaction of the yearly conference, if a preacher or elder, and if an exhorter proven before a quarterly conference, such preacher, elder or exhorter, will for the time not be considered a member of this church.

FORMING AND MEETING CLASSES.

Whereas it is made the duty of elders and preachers to form and hold class meetings, which should always be done in great moderation and meekness, no member will be allowed to use any

means or measure to hinder or prevent an elder or preacher in the discharge of this their duty, a member acting to the contrary must be accountable to the next quarterly conference.

RESPECTING FREE-MASONRY.

Resolved, that Free-Masonry in every sense of the word, be totally discountenanced, and in no wise tolerated in our society, should any of our members continue to attend their lodges, or join as a member of Free-Masonry in any of their processions, or otherwise join the fraternity, he will by so doing be no longer a member of this church.

RESPECTING PRESENTS.

Every traveling preacher in our society shall yearly account to the conference for all presents he may have received on his circuit, to the amount of one dollar or more, for the use of himself or family. And if the conference be convinced that any one circuit has given presents instead of collections, or that the preacher endeavoured to get such in the place of collections, in such case presents shall be considered as collections by the conference. But if on examination it should not so appear, then those preachers receiving presents shall hold them as their own, and in addition receive all the discipline allows them.

THE END.

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GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD JUNE, 14TH. 1833, AT GEO. &
JONATHAN DRESBACH'S, PICKAWAY COUNTY OHIO.

MEMBERS PRESENT.

HENRY KUMLER, *Bishop.*

Pennsylvania Conference.

William Brown,
Ezekiel Boring,
Jacob Snider,

Jacob Erb,
James Niman,
Frederick Gilbert.

Virginia Conference

John Dorcas,

W. R. Rhinehart.

Muskingum Conference

G. H. Spayth,
Adam Hetzel,
S. C. Briggs.

Christian Knegey,
John Echard,

Sciota Conference.

Jacob Baulus,
Samuel Hiestand,
John Coonts,
William Hastings.

George Benedum,
Daniel Davis,
John Russel,

Miami Conference.

Henry Kumler, Jr.
John Federhof,
S. Hofner,
J. Swearingen.

Fred. Bonebrach,
A. S. Decker,
Daniel Kiser,

Indiana Conference.

John Denham,
John McNamer,
James Griffith.

Josiah Davis,
Aaron Former,

ORIGIN,
CONSTITUTION,
DOCTRINE
AND
DISCIPLINE,
OF THE
UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST

CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO:
PRINTED AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE.
1837.

ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the century last past, it pleased the Lord our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world, who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the gospel of Christ crucified, in its purity.

At this time the Lord in mercy remembered the Germans of America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them in their native language.

Amongst others he raised up an *Otterbein*, a *Boehm*, and a *Geeting*, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labor in his neglected vineyard, and call, among the Germans in America, sinners to repentance.—These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labors were blessed; they established in many places, excellent societies and led many precious souls to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread itself more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow laborers, to engage in the vineyard of the Lord; for the harvest was great, and the laborers but few. The Lord called others, who were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow laborers.

The number of members in the society, in different parts of the country, continued to increase from time to time; and the gracious work of reformation, spread through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Several great meetings were appointed, and held annually; when, on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present; represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavors to save souls. At one of these meetings, it was resolved to hold a conference with all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first Conference was held in the City of Baltimore, Md.; in the year of our Lord, 1789. The following preachers were present:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,
MARTIN BOEHM,
GEO. A. GEETING,
CHR. NEWCOMER,

ADAM LEHMAN,
JOHN ERNST,
HENRY WEIDNER.

The second Conference was held in York county, Pa., in Paradise township; at the house of brother Spangler, in the year of our Lord 1791:—The following preachers were present:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,
MARTIN BOEHM,
GEO. A. GEETING,
CHR. NEWCOMER,
ADAM LEHMAN,

JOHN ERNST,
JOHN PFREMMER,
JOHN NEIDIG,
BENEDICT SANDER.

After a mature deliberation, how they might labor most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord; they again appointed such as fellow laborers, of whom they had cause to believe had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time, the number of members continued to increase, and the preachers were obliged to appoint an annual Conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and labor more successfully in the vineyard of the Lord: for some were Presbyterians, or church Reformed; some were Lutherians, others Mennonites, and some few Methodists. They accordingly appointed a Conference, to be held the 25th of September, 1800, in Frederick county, Maryland; at the house of brother Frederick Kemp.—The following preachers were present:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,
MARTIN BOEHM,
GEO. A. GEETING,
CHR. NEWCOMER,
ADAM LEHMAN,
ABR'M DRACKSEL,
JOHN PFREMMER,

CHRISTIAN KRUM,
HENRY KRUM,
JOHN HERSHEY,
JACOB GEISINGER,
HENRY BOEHM,
DIET'K AURAU.

There they united themselves into a society, which bears the name of "UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST;" and elected *William Otterbein* and *Martin Boehm*, as superintendants or bishops, and agreed that each of them should be at liberty, as to the mode and manner of baptism, and to perform it according to their own convictions.

From this time, the society increasing still more and more,

preachers were appointed to travel regularly, inasmuch as the number of preaching places could not otherwise be attended to; and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky: It then became necessary to appoint a Conference in the state of Ohio, because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers, who labored in those states, to travel, annually, such a great distance, to the Conference.

In the mean time, brothers *Boehm* and *Geeting* died, and brother *Otterbein* desired, that another bishop should be elected, because infirmity and old age would not permit him to superintend any longer, who should take charge of the society and preserve Discipline and order. It was resolved at a former Conference, that whenever one of the bishops died, another should be elected in his place;—accordingly, brother *Christian Newcomer* was elected bishop, to take charge and superintend the concerns of the society.

The want of a Discipline in the society, had long been deeply felt; and partial attempts having been made at different times; it was resolved at the Conference held in the State of Ohio, that a General Conference be held, in order to accomplish the same, in a manner, not derogatory to the word of God. The members of this Conference were to be elected from among the preachers, in the different parts of the country; by a vote of the members throughout the society in general. The following brethren were duly elected:

CHR. NEWCOMER,	DANIEL TREYER,
AB'RM. HIESTAND,	GEO. BENEDUM,
ANDREW ZELLER,	AB'RM. TRACKSEL,
CHRISTIAN BERGER,	HENRY G. SPAYTH,
ABRAHAM MEYER,	I. NIGHSWANGER,
JOHN SCHNEIDER,	CHRISTIAN KRUM,
HENRY KUMLER,	& JACOB BOWLES.

The Conference convened on the 6th of June 1835, near Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania. After a mature deliberation, they presented to their brethren, a Discipline, containing the doctrine and rules of the church; desiring that they, together *with the word of God*, should be strictly observed.

God is a God of order, but where there is no order nor church Discipline, the spirit of love and charity will soon be lost.

Therefore, brethren, we beseech you to follow the example of our Lord. As it is written, be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Let the

mind be in you which was in Christ, who took upon himself the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that by his grace we may submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God.—He who will not submit, is in want of humble love; Jesus said, whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another, and whoso loveth not, abideth in death. Let us walk in newness of life, that the prayer of our Lord may be answered in us; that we may be one in him, and that he may give us the glory, which he gave to his disciples, that we may be one, even as he and the Father are one.—Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let no one speak or think evil of his brother, but pray God that he may grant us his spirit, and an earnest desire to lead a truly devoted life, to the honor and glory of his holy name. Amen.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

WE as members of the Church of the UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST, in order to retain a *perfect union*,—accomplish the ends of *justice and equity*,—insure *ecclesiastical*, as well as *domestic tranquility*; provide for the *common interest of the Church*,—promote the *general welfare of society*, and to secure the *blessings of the gospel to ourselves, our posterity, and our fellow men in general*; do ordain and establish the following CONSTITUTION, for the Church aforesaid.

ARTICLE I.

Sec. 1.—All ecclesiastical power herein granted, to make or repeal any rule of Discipline, shall be vested in a General Conference, which shall consist of ministers chosen and elected by the members, in every Conference district, throughout the society. Nevertheless, nothing shall be done, so as to change the article of faith, or in anywise destroy the itinerant plan.

Sec. 2.—No minister shall be considered eligible for election, until he has stood in the capacity as Elder, for the term of three years; having maintained a good moral character, during that time. Any Elder, receiving a transfer, from one Conference to another, shall not be considered eligible for election, under a term of two years; and not then, without a sufficient recommendation from the Conference, of which he had been a member.

Sec. 3.—The number of delegates from each Conference District, shall not exceed one, for every five hundred members. But should it so happen, that a Conference would be formed in a territory, not having five hundred members within its District; that Conference, shall nevertheless, have one delegate to represent its members in General Conference.

Sec. 4.—If any vacancies should occur, through sickness or otherwise, after the election of delegates; it shall be the duty of the Presiding Elder or Elders, immediately, to notify the next highest on the list of votes, that he is now a member, to represent that District, in the ensuing General Conference.

Sec. 5.—The Bishops shall upon all occasions, be considered members of the General Conference, to preside as the organs of that body, as in annual Conferences. Bishops shall be elected every four years, during the sitting of the General Conference, by the members of that body, from among the Elders throughout the Church; who may have stood in that capacity for a term, not less than six years.

Sec. 6.—The General Conference shall be held once, every four years. At the adjournment of which, it shall be the duty of the same, to publish or cause to be published, (excepting such parts as may not be considered expedient,) all their proceedings, for the benefit of society in general.

ARTICLE II.

Sec. 1.—The members in each Conference District, shall solely have the privilege of choosing and electing the delegates for General Conference; which shall invariably be done, at least, three months previous to the sitting of the same.

Sec. 2.—In the election of delegates for General Conference; it shall be the duty of each annual Conference, to appoint a committee of three, in their several Conference Districts, to receive and count the votes, and immediately apprise those who may have been elected.

Sec. 3.—It shall also be the duty of the annual Conference, to furnish the Presiding Elders, with a list of all the Elders, eligible for election: The Presiding Elders shall furnish each circuit preacher in charge; whose duty it shall be, to furnish each class-leader or steward throughout the circuit, with a copy of the same.

Sec. 4.—It shall be the duty of each classleader or steward, to appoint a meeting of the members of each class; for the purpose of

electing, by ballot or otherwise, one or more delegates to represent them in General Conference.

Sec. 5.—It shall also be the duty of each classleader or steward, to sign, enclose and seal, each bill of election—hand it over to the preacher in charge; he again, to the Presiding Elder; whose duty it shall be, to transmit the same, to the committee appointed by the annual Conference.

Sec. 6.—The committee appointed to receive and count the votes, shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and the number of votes for each. Should any two or more of the candidates, have an equal number of votes, the individuals thus appointed, shall determine by lot, who, or which of them are elected. They shall also forward the names of those elected, to the Conference Printing Establishment, for publication.

ARTICLE III.

Sec. 1.—Each annual Conference shall come fully under the jurisdiction of the General Conference; except, under such regulations as the General Conference may deem expedient, in relation to local matters, so as not to prove prejudicial to the interest of the whole society.

Sec. 2.—The business of each annual Conference, shall strictly be done according to Discipline.

Sec. 3.—Any annual Conference, acting in violation of the doings of General Conference, shall by impeachment, be tried by the same.

Sec. 4.—No annual Conference, shall have the exclusive right, to form or admit any new Conference within the bounds of society, without the consent of the General Conference.

Sec. 5.—All officers, whether Bishops, Presiding Elders, &c.; shall, on impeachment, be dealt with according to Discipline, as other members, expelled or retained, as the case may require.

ARTICLE IV.

Sec. 1.—If at any time, after the passing of this Constitution, it should be contemplated either to alter or amend the same: It shall be the privilege of any member in society, to publish or cause to be published, such contemplation, at least three months, before the election of delegates to the General Conference.

Sec. 2.—No General Conference, shall have the power to alter or amend, the foregoing Constitution, except it be, by a vote of two thirds of that body.

RESOLUTIONS.

Inasmuch, as it is the indefeasible right of every man, to think and act for himself, in matters of faith and morality. This right not only being granted by the charter of his creation, but also, by the Discipline adopted for the better government of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ; be it resolved there-fore:—

1st. That no rule be adopted by General Conference, so as to infringe upon the rights of any, as it relates to the mode and manner of baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, or the washing of feet, &c.

2d. *Resolved*, No rule or ordinance shall be passed in General Conference, so as to deprive the local preachers of the eligibility of election, as delegates to the same. Nor yet, to deprive them of their legal vote in the annual Conferences, to which they severally belong.

3d. *Resolved*, that the foregoing resolutions, shall neither be altered or appealed, without the unanimous consent of the whole Conference.

Done in General Conference, by the unanimous consent of that body, this 11th day of May, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our names.

HENRY KUMLER,	} Bish'ps
SAMUEL HIESTAND,	
JACOB ERB,	
JACOB WINTER,	
JACOB RHINEHART,	
JACOB J, GLOSSBRENNER,	
ADAM HETZLER,	
DAVID WEIMER,	
JOHN DORCAS,	
GEORGE HISKEY,	
JOHN COONS,	
WILLIAM HANBY,	
JNO FETHERHOFF,	
WILLIAM STUBBS,	
FRANCIS WHITCOM,	
JOHN LOPP,	
FREDERICK KENOYER,	
WILLIAM DAVIS.	

CIRCULAR.

To the members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, throughout these United States.

Dear brethren, by whose authority, we as a General Conference, have been authorized to legislate, on matters pertaining to the government of our Church; and having long since been convinced, of the great necessity of a constitution, for the better regulation thereof; have by unanimous consent, framed and established the foregoing. We are well aware that we have transcended the bounds given us by our Discipline, which will be found in the Constitution; *Article fourth, Section second*: Declaring that the said Constitution, can neither be altered or amended, without a majority of two-thirds of a General Conference. If there had been a general notice given to the Church, previous to the election of delegates, that there would be a memorial offered to General Conference, praying them to adopt a constitution, and to ratify it, agreeable to *Article fourth; Section second*: then the General Conference would have had full power, to have done so. The object of this circular is, (feeling that the government of our Church is not as firm as it ought to be,) to give notice to our Church throughout the union, that we intend to present a memorial to the next General Conference, praying them to ratify the constitution now adopted, according to *Article fourth; Section second*: In testimony of our ardent desire for the welfare of our Church, and the general spread of the gospel.

Written by order of General Conference, Germantown, Ohio;
May 12th 1837.

Signed in behalf of the same, by

WILLIAM R. RHINEHART, *Sec'ry.*

SECTION FIRST.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

In the name of God we declare and confess before all men, that we believe in the only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both. That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore, sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is very God and man, that he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, and was born of her: that he is the Saviour and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus. That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, to intercede for us, and that he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the Father and the Son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We believe, that the Holy Bible, old and new Testament, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the spirit of God, as their only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the holy scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We believe that the ordinances, namely: baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practiced by all Christian societies: and that it is incumbent on all the children of God, particularly, to practice them; but the manner in which, ought always be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. Also, the example of washing feet, is left to the judgment of every one to practice or not; but it is not becoming, for any of our preachers to traduce any of his brethren, whose judgment and understanding, in this respect, are different from his own, either in public or in private; whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect, shall be considered a traducer of his brethren, and shall be answerable for the same, to the annual Conference.

SECTION SECOND.

GENERAL AND YEARLY CONFERENCES.

Question. After what manner, are the transactions of the Conferences to be considered?

Answer. It is desired, that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person rise and speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Qst. How, and in what manner are the members of General Conference elected?—*See Constitution.*—

Qst. How often are the General Conferences to be held.

Ans. Every four years.

Qst. Has the General Conference any other power, which the annual Conference has not?

Ans. The General Conference has the power alone to elect one or more Bishops from among the Elders, for a period of four years; furthermore, to adopt such rules as may be necessary for the better interest of the society in general. Yet, nothing shall be done by the said Conference, which would in any wise affect or change the article of faith; neither the spirit, intent, or meaning of the rules or Discipline as they now stand. The General Conference has to determine the districts and bounds of the yearly Conferences.

Qst. Who are the members of the yearly Conference?

Ans. All the Elders & licentiate preachers, who are for the time being in the District where the Conference is held; but when such licentiate preachers are proposed for ordination, the Elders only shall determine the same by vote.

Qst. In what manner are the transactions of a Conference to be conducted?

Ans. A portion of scripture will be read; also singing and prayer each day, at the opening of Conference;—singing and prayer at the close.

2. The Conference shall also elect two Secretaries, one German and one English, wherever it may be necessary.

3. The preachers will be examined, respecting their deportment towards their fellow beings; whether their conduct in life be blameless and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote the kingdom of God.

4. Have any of the preachers died during the last year?

5. Who are the candidates for the Ministry?
6. Are any to be ordained to the office of Eldership?
7. Who is willing to travel the ensuing year, without reserve?
8. Who are the Presiding Elders?
9. What has been collected for contingent expenses, and the salary of travelling preachers?
10. Has reckoning been made with the travelling preachers?
11. Have they received their dues?
12. Where are the preachers stationed this year?
13. When and where shall our next Conference be held?
14. Is there any thing more to do?
15. Is all that has been done entered upon record?

SECTION THIRD.

ELECTION OF BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How are the Bishops to be elected?

Ans. The General Conference shall elect them by a majority of votes, nevertheless, the Conference may, at their option, retain the former Bishop or Bishops, yet other four years. The newly elected, however, as well as those retained, must be capable of attending the Conferences appointed them, otherwise they cannot be elected.

Qst. What are the duties of the Bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside in our Conferences.

2. They have in conjunction with the Presiding Elders, of the past and present year, to fix the appointments of the travelling preachers for the several circuits, provided, they shall not allow any itinerant preachers to remain in the same station, more than three years successively; unless particular circumstances require it, and only then, with the consent of the Conference.

3. The Bishops, in conjunction with two Elders appointed by Conference; shall point out the Districts which are to be travelled by the Presiding Elders.

4. They have to attend the Conferences, and oversee the spiritual concerns of the Church.

5. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

6. When a Bishop ceases or neglects to attend the several Conferences committed to his charge, he cannot be suffered to retain

his office; unless it be through sickness or some other unavoidable circumstance.

7. If our Church should at any time, be destitute of a Bishop, in consequence of death, suspension or otherwise; a chairman shall be elected from among the Elders, at each annual Conference,—each chairman shall attend the next succeeding Conference, in conjunction with the chairman there elected; that a regular correspondence be maintained, until the ensuing General Conference, where one or more Bishops shall be elected.

8. It shall be the duty of the Bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present, during the sitting of every annual Conference.

SECTION FOURTH.

PRESIDING ELDERS, ELECTION AND DUTY.

Qst. How are the Presiding elders elected.

Ans. The Bishops shall propose to the Conference some of the Elders, who have stood their time of probation, and with the consent of the Conference, elect them for one year.

Qst. What are the duties of a Presiding Elder.

Ans. 1. To travel through the District appointed him, and preach as often as he can.

2. He has to take charge of the travelling and local preachers in his District, and see that they conduct themselves as becometh the gospel of Christ.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and camp-meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lord's Supper, and hold quarterly-meeting Conferences with the preachers, exhorters, leaders and stewards; he shall further enquire into, and examine whether the travelling and local preachers do their duty, particularly, whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sunday: and where there are more than one, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result; and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order, love and seriousness in the societies.

4. He can also, in conjunction with two Elders, preachers, exhorters or leaders, (one from each circuit,) change the preachers on his District. Should any circuit be found without a travelling preacher, it shall be his duty to employ a preacher to travel on that circuit, until the next annual Conference.

5. And should it so happen, that a District should be without a Presiding Elder, information thereof shall immediately be given to a Bishop, who shall appoint an Elder in the district, to act as Presiding Elder until the ensuing annual Conference.

SECTION FIFTH.

DUTY OF CIRCUIT PREACHERS AND HOW RECEIVED.

Qst. What are the duties of a circuit preacher?

Ans. To submit peaceably to the station appointed him by Conference.

2. He shall attend the appointments on his circuit regularly, preach to the people, and hold society meetings with the members, wherever it is acceptable with the class.

3. It shall be the duty of the preacher in charge, to see that there are suitable persons appointed in each class, as steward, leader or leaders.

4. He shall read three sections of our Discipline, every six months, in each class; namely,—*the Article of Faith, the Duty of Members, and the Duty of Leaders and Stewards.*

5. He shall sit as president on the trial of members, and keep a correct account of the same.

6. He shall render a strict account of the condition of his circuit, to the Presiding Elder, at each quarterly Conference.

7. He shall give charge to all sub-agents of the Religious Telescope, to keep an account of all its subscribers, in their respective neighborhoods.

8. He shall also make settlement with the sub-agents once a year, and render an account thereof to the district agent.

9. He shall furthermore make out a list of all the appointments on his circuit, and present them to the Presiding Elder, at each annual Conference, for the benefit of the next who may travel that circuit.

SECTION SIXTH.

ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Qst. How is an Elder constituted?

Ans. After a probation of three years, a preacher may be presented to the yearly Conference, for consideration; and if on

examination by the Conference, he should be chosen as an Elder, he may, by the imposition of hands, be ordained by a Bishop and two Elders. It shall, however, be the privilege of an Annual Conference, to grant a permit to licentiates, to perform the ordinance of baptism, and administer the sacrament where circumstances make it necessary.

2. What is the duty of an Elder?—To preach as often as he can and to baptize; and assist the Presiding Elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the Presiding Elder cannot attend, then one or two Elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavor to establish and hold class-meetings, and assist in the election of leaders and stewards.

3. To make a collection, freely contributed, quarterly, for the traveling preachers and for the poor; to take specification thereof, signed by the leader, at each place, and when there is no leader present, to have it signed by some other member, in order to account with the Presiding Elder, so that all things be done in a regular manner.

4. Where a local Elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no traveling preacher comes to, he shall make a collection and in like manner take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the Presiding Elder or to the Conference, for the support of needy preachers who preach among poor people.

5. Should a traveling Preacher or Elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the Presiding Elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, unless it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable to the next annual Conference, and shall not be entitled to any salary for the time he may have traveled during the year.

6. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the Elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, and by making a collection for their benefit among the societies in their District; though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to the travelling preachers.

SECTION SEVENTH.

THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND THEIR DUTY.

Qst. How is a preacher to be received?

Ans. Any person desiring license to preach among us, must obtain a recommendation from the class to which he belongs, or one or more trustworthy persons, and present it to a Quarterly Conference, where he may be, (if in their judgment, expedient,) licensed, until the setting of the next Annual Conference, whose duty it shall be to examine said applicant agreeable to Discipline, and act accordingly. No one, however, can be admitted otherwise than on trial, and one who is taken on trial, may either be admitted or rejected without doing him any harm, otherwise it would be no trial

2. No preacher of any other society can be taken up as a preacher in our society, without being able to produce a recommendation of his standing and behavior from his own society, or of some trust-worthy persons who are known as such to the Conference or to the Presiding Elder. In such case, the quarterly or annual Conference may take him on trial for one year, after which, if his conduct prove to be in accordance with the Gospel of Christ; he shall be considered as standing in the same capacity among us, as he did in the society from which he came.

3. Every person proposed as a preacher, shall be examined by the conference and the following questions put to him:—

Have you known God in Christ Jesus as a sin pardoning God, and have you obtained forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the holy spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and that therein only is contained the true way to our soul's salvation?

What foundation have you for such belief?

What is your motive that you desire permission to preach the gospel?

What is your knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification, and redemption?

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow mortals lie nearer to your heart than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace as the brethren may think it expedient?

Are you willing as much as is in your power, to assist in upholding the itinerant plan, and support the same as much as possible?

Qst. 2. What are the duties of a preacher?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers, and establish class-meetings; to converse with the members on the situation or condition of their souls, and seek to administer relief, strengthen and direct those that are afflicted and labor under temptations, to animate the indolent, and endeavor as much as possible to edify and instruct all in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; never omit to visit the sick, but on all occasions to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers by a well-ordered and exemplary life.

Qst. 3. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time with unnecessary things, at any place. Be always serious. Let your motto be, *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women; demean yourself in all respects as a true Christian.

2. Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one without good evidence; and always put the most favorable construction on such matters, as the nature of the subject, consistent with truth, will admit.

Speak evil of no one; whatsoever may be your thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned, what you think wrong in his conduct.

3. Let your business be, to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching and visiting from house to house; in instruction and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION EIGHTH.

THE IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS, AND HOW THEY
ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF.

Qst. 1. What shall be done, when a Bishop, Presiding Elder, or preacher is reported of being guilty of *some crime* forbidden in the word of God?

Ans. When a Bishop is thus accused, it shall be the duty of a Presiding Elder and an elder, after being duly notified thereof, to inquire into and examine whether they are founded in truth; but, as the Apostle says, they shall not receive an accusation without two or three witnesses. If it then appear that he is justly accused, they shall take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the Bishop accused; and appoint a time and place where the accusers and accused shall be present to each other, when the cause shall be tried by two Presiding Elders and three Elders. If he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the yearly Conference, where the Presiding Elder and Elders shall again examine and try the same; and if found guilty again, he shall be suspended or expelled as the case may require.

Qst. 2. When a Presiding Elder is thus accused.

Ans. It shall be the duty of the next or nearest Elder and a preacher to inquire into and examine them, and if the accused appear to be guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send him, the accused, a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers with the accused shall meet and be present to each other. And in the absence of the Bishop, another Presiding Elder and two Elders shall be called, who shall examine the charges, and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace till the Conference, where he shall be accountable.

Qst. 3. When an Elder or preacher is charged with immoral conduct, what shall be done?

Ans. The preacher thereabout, to whom it shall be known, shall take with him another preacher or exhorter, or leader, and examine into the charge; should he appear guilty, then notice thereof shall be given him, and a time appointed, where they, the accusers and the accused, shall meet and be present to each other. Three Elders or preachers shall try and determine his case, which are to be appointed by the parties concerned, each party appointing one, and the two a third; and if he be convicted, he

shall hold his peace till the conference, where he shall be accountable.

But should sufficient satisfaction be given in either of the foregoing cases, by an expression of repentance or otherwise, they may be retained if considered expedient.

SECTION NINTH.

MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Qst. How shall members be taken into our society?

Ans. When at any meeting a person makes known his desire to become a member of our society, then the preacher present shall put to him the following question:

Have you experienced the pardon of your sins, and are you now determined by the grace of God to save your soul?

If the person answers the question in the affirmative, and no objection be made by any member, on account of his, or her moral conduct, then the preacher will give his right hand to such, as members of our society, and with consent of the person, the preacher will record his or her name on the class book, but so long as any member cannot answer the above question in the affirmative, such will have no vote in the society.

Every member of this society should acknowledge and confess, that he believes the Bible to be and contain the holy Word of God; that he will henceforth strive with all his heart to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling, to the end that he may be enabled to *flee from the wrath to come.*

Every member should endeavor to lead a good life; be diligent in prayer, particularly in private; and, for his own edification, to be present and attend, when practicable, at all meetings, both public worship and prayer meetings.

Heads of families should never omit to pray with their families morning and evening, and set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk as in the presence of God; also accustom himself to a close communion with God in all his employments, and never speak evil of his fellow beings, but practise love towards friend and foe, do good to the poor, and endeavor to be a follower of Jesus Christ *in deed.*

Every member shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in

the word of God. Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in exercise of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

Every member of this society should contribute something quarterly towards the support of the itinerant preachers, if his circumstances will admit of it, willingly and freely.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable and godly life in the intercourse with all men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace, particularly to the higher or ruling powers, every one shall be subject, as the word of God requires.

Among members of the society, the preachers shall establish one or more class-meetings, and the members when practicable, shall assemble at the place appointed, to hold prayer-meetings, in order to edify themselves in the presence of God, and promote the love of good works in Christ Jesus.

In every Class, the leader should be elected in presence of the preacher, whose duty it is to appoint prayer and class meetings, to commence and conclude the same; the freedom of our prayer and class-meetings shall extend to any sincere and well-disposed person or persons, who may desire to attend them, although such persons be not members of our society.

When members trespass against each other, as brethren or sisters, correct the faults "first between *thee* and *him* alone: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a Publican.

On any dispute between two or more of the society, concerning the payment of debts or other cause, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the oversight of the society, or the preacher residing thereabouts, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall choose the third; the three arbiters are then to decide the dispute.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may refer to the next quarterly or great meet-

ing, and apply to the presiding Elder for a *second* arbitration, and if the preachers find sufficient cause, they shall grant a second arbitration; in which case each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded from the society. And if any member of the society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended to him by a preacher or leader, who has the charge of the society; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member, before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled, except the case be of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law, as executors or administrators, or when a member is in danger of suffering an unexpected loss of property, which will allow him immediate legal process.

If any member of this society shall publicly transgress, such member shall likewise be publicly reprimanded, and in case such member shall not humble himself, the same shall be publicly excluded from the church.

SECTION TENTH.

SALARY OF PREACHERS.

Qst. 1. How and in what manner shall the Bishops and preachers be provided for, and how shall the necessary means be collected?

Ans. A collection shall annually be lifted for the Bishops, at every preaching place throughout our whole society, the preachers shall pay over this collection to their respective Presiding Elders at the annual Conference, and the Presiding Elders shall give an account thereof to their respective annual Conferences; out of this collection the Bishops shall receive their salary; provided, that one who has a family does not receive more than \$160 and his travelling expenses; and if without a family, \$80 and his traveling expenses.

2nd. The preachers in towns or cities, who stand under the direction of the Conference with the itinerant preachers, receive their salary from the respective societies whom they serve; but it is their duty to give an account to the annual Conference, and limit their salary to the usual salary and necessary expenses, and if there should be a surplus, to pay the same over to the

annual Conference, to be applied for the benefit of the traveling preachers.

3rd. For the support of the traveling preachers, the Presiding Elder and preachers shall appoint in each class a steward, to make quarterly collections in money or produce, which produce to be valued what it may be worth between man and man, and an account kept thereof, and proportionably distributed among the traveling preachers. All stewards will submit their accounts to the Presiding Elder at the quarterly meeting, and the Presiding Elder will submit his accounts to the annual Conference, in order to show what each traveling preacher has received, that equality be observed. The annual salary of a traveling preacher, or traveling Presiding Elder is also limited, like the salary of the Bishops to \$160, if with a family; or \$80, if without a family, and traveling expenses.

4. Yet when a traveling preacher has a family of children, the yearly Conference of which he is a member, will in that case grant him such an allowance in addition to that above stated, as in their judgment will accord with the wants of said preacher's family.

5. Should the collection of any one District be insufficient, then it shall be left to a committee appointed by the Conference, who will as they may find it advisable, make up such deficiency, out of other collections made.

6. *Resolved*, that the Bishops, Presiding Elders, and Circuit Preachers, shall receive pay only in proportion to the time they may actually have traveled.

Provided however, that they shall not be docked for any providential interventions, such as sickness, &c. &c.

APPENDIX.

OF THE NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensibly (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Qst. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Ans. 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labor, in honor, each to prefer the other, before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of the *causes, evils and cures of heart and church divisions.*

VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Qst. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is necessary in order to promote confidence and communion with God among us; further to wean us from the love of the world, and inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also to encourage us to strive after and practice brotherly love, that no evil *thinking* or *judging* of one another be found among us; and lastly, that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher should make it his duty to instruct the people on every occasion; both public and private, and exhort them to be diligent in all good works and doctrine. Until this be done, and that in sincerity, we shall, upon the whole, be of little use, and our good shall be evil spoken of, therefore wherever we may be, we should guard against useless and idle conversation.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house, and exhorting the people, is found or implied in these solemn words of the apostle:

"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the Word; be instant in season, and out of season; Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering."

THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Qst. What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Ans. Let him, who is in any wise zealous for God, and the souls of men, begin the work without delay. Where children are found, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray

with them earnestly, yet simply and plainly, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth.

FORM AND MANNER OF ORDAINING PREACHERS.

1. On the day appointed, there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

2. After their names have been read aloud, the Bishop or Elder shall say unto the people present:—

3. *Beloved Brethren in Christ!* Is there any among you, who know any impediment or crime in any of those persons to be ordained Elders, for which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God, and show what the crime or impediment may be.

4. If any crime or impediment be alleged, the Bishop shall cease from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of said crime.

5. If no accusation be alleged, the Bishop, or Elder, shall read the following articles to any and all who may be chosen for ordination.

“For an Elder must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate:

“Holding fast the faithful word as he had been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

Qst. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry, to serve God in the church of Christ, to the honor and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust with the help of God.

Qst. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures; old and new Testament?

Ans. I do believe them.

Qst. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your life according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make yourself, as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Qst. Will you obey them to whom the charge and govern-

ment over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions?

Ans. I will endeavor, through the grace of God, so to do.

[Then prayer is made.]

After prayer, the Bishop and Elder shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say:

“Take thou authority to execute the office of an Elder in the Church of God. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Amen.

Hereupon the Bishop or Elder, shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:

“Take thou authority to read and preach the Word of God in the church of Christ.”

Then the Bishop or Elder shall read from the 12th chapter of St. Luke, 35—38:

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Then the Bishop or Elder shall pray.—After which the following benediction is pronounced.

The peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE FORM TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGE.

ADDRESS.

We are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together N. and M. as man and wife, if any person present know any just cause or impediment why these two persons should not be joined in marriage, they will now speak or for ever hereafter hold their peace.

If no impediment be alleged, then shall the minister say unto the man.

N. N. Wilt thou have this woman M. M. to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love, honor

and comfort her, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live:—If so, then answer yes.

Then shall the Minister say unto the woman.

M. M. Wilt thou have this man N. N. to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance; wilt thou love, honor, and obey him, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live;—If so, then answer yes.

Then the Minister shall require them to join their right hands together and say.

Those whom God had joined together let no man put asunder. In as much as N. and M. have consented together in marriage, and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses, I pronounce them man and wife, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

HOW TO RECEIVE AN EXHORTER.

Any Brother desiring license to exhort, will first make it known to the class-leader, and the class-leader will procure a recommendation from the class of which the applicant is a member at the time, upon which the Presiding Elder with the advice of the Quarterly Conference, will license the brother.

FORMING AND MEETING CLASSES.

Whereas it is made the duty of Elders and Preachers to form and hold class-meetings, which should always be done in great moderation and meekness, no member will be allowed to use any means or measures to hinder or prevent an Elder or Preacher in the discharge of this their duty, a member acting to the contrary shall be accountable to the next quarterly Conference.

BOOK PRINTING.

Resolved, that none of our members, either preachers or laymen, shall be permitted to become the author of a Doctrinal Book or Pamphlet, in a printed form, without the approbation of the Annual Conference, or a select committee by them chosen.

FREE-MASONRY.

Resolved, that Free-Masonry in every sense of the word, be totally discountenanced, and in no wise tolerated in our society,

should any of our members continue to attend their lodges, or join as a member of Free-Masonry in any of their processions, or otherwise join the fraternity, he will by so doing exclude himself as a member of our church.

PRESENTS.

Every traveling preacher in our society, shall yearly account to the Conference, for all presents he may have received on his circuit, to the amount of one dollar or more, for the use of himself or family. And if the Conference be convinced that any one circuit has given presents instead of collections, or that the preacher endeavored to get such in the place of collections, in such case presents shall be considered as collections by the Conference. But if on examination it should not so appear, then those preachers receiving presents shall hold them as their own, and in addition receive all the Discipline allows them.

SLAVERY.

Resolved, That all slavery, in every sense of the word, be totally prohibited, and in no way tolerated in our church.—Should any be found in our society, who hold slaves, they cannot continue as members, without they do personally manumit, or set free such slaves.

OATHS.

We, the United Brethren in Christ, Do believe, that the practice of swearing, either by the Bible, or in the name of Almighty God, is, in our opinion, contrary to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, "swear not at all," and that the mode of testifying to the Truth, when thereto required so to do in a legal form, by way of affirmation, is on us solemnly, conscientiously and fully binding before God and man to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

VENDING AND DISTILLATION OF ARDENT SPIRITS.

Should any Exhorter, Preacher, or Elder, from and after the next annual conference in 1834, be engaged in the distillation or vending of ardent spirits, he shall for the first and second offence be accountable to the quarterly or yearly conference, of which he is a member; the said conference shall in meekness admonish the offending brother to desist; should those friendly admonitions fail,

and the party continue to act in the same, and it be proven to the satisfaction of the yearly conference, such Preacher, Elder or Exhorter, shall for the time being, not be considered a member of our church.

CIRCULAR.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF THE "UNITED BRETHREN
IN CHRIST."

Dearly beloved Brethren in the Lord:—

We, as your humble servants in the Gospel yoke, feeling as much as ever convinced of the great evil existing in our world, in consequence of the inordinate use of ardent spirits, do hereby express our entire disapprobation to the rage of that great monster, in our land. We would therefore, in the most affectionate terms beseech you all by the mercies of him, who, in this lower world, went about doing good; and by whose authority it is said that no drunkard shall inherit eternal life; to withhold your influence from the inordinate use of the HYDRA MONSTER, which has done so much evil in this christian land. And we would now ask our brethren, have any of you Distilleries in operation? And do you sell to the Tavern keeper, or to him who keeps a grocery, or to any of your neighbors, for the purpose of occasional drinking or public gatherings? If you do, Brethren! It is to be feared, that there are heavy responsibilities resting upon you. Take care that in the great day of eternity, you do not suffer loss, and some of your works be burned. We would also say, that if any of our brethren are engaged in selling or retailing this disgraceful traffic; they are in our opinion, under equal responsibilities—for to say the least of it; it is demoralizing in its tendency; and feeling disposed, as a General Conference, to advise, rather than legislate on this subject; we do say, that if our brethren regard us as those who are watching over their souls for good, they will at once desist from every kind of traffic mentioned in this article as a drink. And, in conclusion, we would say, that whatever the sacrifice may be on the part of our brethren in consequence of our humble request, they will have a consciousness of having complied with the request of those who wish them well; and we trust, a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

May the great head of the church, bless us with the mind that was in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Written and passed in General Conference, Germantown, Montgomery Co., Ohio, May 16th, 1837.

W. R. RHINEHART, *Sec'y.*

PREAMBLE.

At a meeting of a General Conference held by the United Brethren in Christ, in Germantown, Ohio, May 10th 1837, it was resolved that a CONSTITUTION should be formed, for the better government of a Printing Establishment, now in operation in the town of Circleville, Ohio, belonging to said Church.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

SEC. 1. *Resolved*, That the above Printing Establishment be known by the name of the Conference Printing Establishment, of the United Brethren in Christ.

SEC. 2. *Resolved*, That all legislative authority herein granted, shall be vested in the General Conference of said Church; whose duty it is, to make or amend any rules which in their judgment, may seem expedient.

SEC. 3. *Resolved*, That it be the duty of the General Conference, to appoint or elect three Trustees every four years; and also, to employ an Editor and Treasurer.

SEC. 4. *Resolved*, If a vacancy should occur in the Editorial or Treasury department, by sickness, death, or otherwise, that, it shall be the duty of the Trustees to employ some other suitable person or persons to fill said vacancy, until the sitting of the next General Conference.

SEC. 5. *Resolved*, Also, that in case a vacancy should occur with the Trustees either by death or otherwise, it shall be the duty of the remaining two, to make choice of a third person to fill said vacancy, until the sitting of the next General Conference.

SEC. 6. *Resolved*, That the proceeds of said establishment, over and above contingent expenses, shall be applied to the traveling and worn out preachers and their widows and orphans; to be divided among the different annual conferences, as the General Conference may direct.

ARTICLE II.

SEC. 1. *Resolved*, That it shall be the duty of the Trustees to make settlement with the Treasurer and Editor every six months, and cause the Treasurer to make out and report to each annual Conference of the Scioto district, and also to make a special report to each General Conference.

SEC. 2. *Resolved*, That it shall be the duty of the Scioto annual Conference, in the interval of a General Conference, to see that the Editor, Treasurer and Trustees, discharge their official duties as required in this constitution.

SEC. 3. *Resolved*, That on impeachment of any of the above named officers, it shall be the duty of the above named annual Conference, to examine into said impeachment, and if guilty in their opinion, to dismiss them, and supply the vacancy until the sitting of the next Conference.

ARTICLE III.

SEC. 1. *Resolved*, That it be the duty of the Editor to pay *strict* attention to all communications sent for insertion, to revise them if necessary, and insert them; nevertheless, if he should receive any, which, in his opinion are inconsistent with the doctrine and rules of our Church, he shall present them to the Treasurer, or one or more of the Trustees, and if rejected by them shall be withheld, otherwise inserted.

SEC. 2. *Resolved*, That it be the duty of the Editor to write editorial for each paper, and attend strictly to the reading of proof-sheet; making selections, &c.; and when not employed in either, to put in his time in labor in the office as other hands.

SEC. 3. *Resolved*, Also, that it be the duty of the Editor to keep a general oversight over the hands in the office, and see that they do not spend their time in idleness.

SEC. 4. *Resolved*, That the Trustees shall have a general oversight over the Editor and Treasurer, and see that they discharge their duties, and if they do not, may be suspended from office, until the setting of the next annual Conference, who shall determine the case; in which case said Trustees shall supply the vacancy, for the time being.

ARTICLE IV.

SEC. 1. *Resolved*, That it shall be the duty of the Treasurer to take charge of all temporary concerns of the office, keep all the

books pertaining thereunto, furnish by the direction of Trustees, such materials as may be needed at all times, and to act as a general Book-agent under the instruction of said Trustees.

SEC. 2. *Resolved*, That the Treasurer, when not employed in his official duties, shall work in the office as another hand.

SEC. 3. *Resolved*, Finally, that the Trustees shall have a right to make any by-laws that to them may seem expedient, for the better regulation of the minor concerns of the office, *Provided*, they do not violate any of the provisions of this constitution.

Signed in behalf of the Conference on the day and date above written.

HENRY KUMLER, } *Bis'ps.*
SAM'L HEISTAND. }

W. R. RHINEHART, *Sec'y.*

BUILDING MEETING HOUSES, AND THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED.

Q. Is any thing advisable in regard to building meeting houses.

A. Let all our meeting houses be built plain and decent with free seats, and not more expensive than necessary.

Q. To whom are our meeting houses and the premises belonging to them, to be deeded?

A. To a Board of Trustees and their successors in office, in trust as the property of the church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Q. How is a Board of Trustees constituted?

A. Whenever it is contemplated by a society to build or purchase a meeting house, it shall be the duty of a leader or steward of such society, to make it known to the Quarterly Conference of the circuit or station to which they belong, whose duty it shall be to appoint a judicious Board of Trustees, of not less than three in number,—*Provided*, however, that none be required to serve more than four years unless indispensably necessary.

No person shall be considered eligible as a Trustee for any of our meeting houses, who is not a regular member of our church.

Q. How are the Trustees to proceed in building a meeting house?

A. They shall form an estimate of the amount necessary to procure a lot of ground, to build and make such other improvements as may be conceived necessary: however, they shall not

commence building, until two-thirds of the money according to such estimate shall be secured, or subscribed; and also, a lawful title for the lot upon which they intend to build.

To hold annual meetings, and keep a fair and regular record of all the transactions of their board, in a book provided for that purpose, which shall at all times be open for inspection, by the Quarterly Conferences of said circuit, or station.

To take care of the meeting-house property, furniture, premises, burial ground, &c.

Q. What shall be done when a vacancy or vacancies occur in the Board of Trustees, by ceasing to be a member, by suspension, death or otherwise.

A. It shall be the duty of the Quarterly Conference, to appoint a suitable person or persons, to fill such vacancy or vacancies.

Q. What shall be done when any of our houses are vacant?

A. It shall be the duty of a Quarterly Conference of the nearest circuit, to appoint not less than three suitable persons for Trustees, who shall have the power when authorized by two-thirds of the members of that Conference, to lease, rent, or sell such meeting house and the appurtenances belonging to it, and appropriate the money arising from such lease, rent or sale; to what it may direct.

NOTE.—The Trustees will be careful in all cases to have deeds of conveyance legally executed and recorded in the county records where the property is, that is, to have the deed made to them and to their successors in office, in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and that they will erect and build, or cause to be built, a house of worship, for the use of the members of the said church, according to the rules of Discipline, which may from time to time be adopted by the church.

BOOK-AGENTS.

1. *Resolved*—That there shall be a Book Agent appointed in each Annual Conference District, whose duty it shall be to take charge of all books, &c. sent him by the Treasurer of, and appertaining to the Conference printing establishment, in Circleville.

2. *Resolved*, That he, (the said agent) shall be accountable to the Treasurer of the Conference printing establishment, in Circleville, Ohio.

3. *Resolved*—That it shall be the duty of the Book Agent, so far as may be safe or expedient, to distribute all the Books sent him by the Treasurer, to the circuit preachers, for the use of the church.

4. *Resolved*, That the Agent keep an accurate account of all the distributions and collections for, and in behalf of the said Conference printing establishment. If books are wanted in his District, he is to notify the Treasurer by letter.

5. *Resolved*—That the Agent shall make settlement with the Treasurer, by letter or otherwise, every six months.

ERRATA.

Eighth page—2d line; read 1815, instead of 1835.—*This error was not discovered until some were struck off.*

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ORIGIN,
DOCTRINE,
CONSTITUTION
AND
DISCIPLINE,
OF THE
UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO.
PRINTED AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE.
1841.

ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

IN the eighteenth century, it pleased the Lord our God, to awaken persons in different parts of the world, who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state, and preach the Gospel of Christ crucified in its purity.

About the middle of the said century the Lord, in mercy, remembered the Germans of America, who, living scattered in this extensive country, had but seldom an opportunity to hear the Gospel of a crucified Saviour preached to them, in their native language.

Amongst others, he raised up William Otterbein and Martin Boehm in the State of Pennsylvania, and George A. Geeting in the State of Maryland, armed them with spirit, grace and strength, to labor in his neglected vineyard, and to call, among the Germans in America, sinners to repentance. These men obeyed the call of their Lord and Master; their labors were blessed; they established, in many places, excellent societies, and led many precious souls to Jesus Christ. Their sphere of action spread more and more, so that they found it necessary to look about for more fellow-laborers, to engage in the vineyard of the Lord; for the harvest was great, and the laborers but few. The Lord called others, who were willing to devote their strength to his service; such, then, were accepted by one or the other of the preachers, as fellow-laborers.

The number of members in the society, in different parts of the country, continued to increase from time to time; and the gracious work of reformation spread through the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Several great meetings were appointed, and held annually; when on such occasions, Otterbein would hold particular conversations with the preachers then present, represent to them the importance of the ministry, and the necessity of their utmost endeavors to save souls. At one of these meetings, it was resolved to hold a conference with all the preachers, in order to take into consideration, how, and in what manner they might be most useful.

The first conference was held in the city of Baltimore, Md.;

in the year of our Lord, 1789. The following preachers were present, viz:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,	ADAM LEHMAN,
MARTIN BOEHM,	JOHN ERNST,
GEO. A. GEETING,	HENRY WEIDNER,
CHN. NEWCOMER.	

The second conference was held in Paradise Township, York Co. Pa., at the house of brother Spangler, in the year of our Lord 1791. The following preachers were present, viz:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,	JOHN ERNST,
MARTIN BOEHM,	J. G. PFREMMER,
GEO. A. GEETING,	JOHN NEIDIG,
CHN. NEWCOMER,	BENEDICT SANDER.
ADAM LEHMAN,	

After mature deliberation, how they might labor most usefully in the vineyard of the Lord, they again appointed such, as fellow laborers, of whom they had cause to believe, that they had experienced true religion in their own souls.

In the mean time, the number of members continued to increase, and the preachers were obliged to appoint an Annual Conference, in order to unite themselves more closely, and to labor more successfully in the vineyard of the Lord; for, some had been Presbyterians or German Reformed, some Lutherans, and others Menonists.—They accordingly appointed a conference, to be held on the 25th of Sept. 1800, in Frederick Co. Md., at the house of brother Frederick Kemp. The following preachers were present, viz:—

WM. OTTERBEIN,	CHRISTIAN KRUM,
MARTIN BOEHM,	HENRY KRUM,
GEO. A. GEETING,	JOHN HERSHEY,
CHN. NEWCOMER,	JACOB GEISINGER,
ADAM LEHMAN,	HENRY BOEHM,
ABR'M DRACKSEL,	DIET'K AURAUUF.
J. G. PFREMMER,	

There they united themselves into a society which bears the name, "UNITED BRETHERN IN CHRIST," and elected *Wm. Otterbein* and *Martin Boehm*, as superintendents or bishops, and agreed that each of them should be at liberty, as to the

mode and manner of baptism, to perform it according to their own convictions.

From this time, the society increasing still more and more, preachers were appointed to travel regularly, in as much as the number of preaching places could not otherwise be attended to; and the work spread itself into the states of Ohio and Kentucky. It then became necessary to appoint a conference in the State of Ohio; because it was conceived too laborious for the preachers who labored in those States, to travel, annually, such a great distance, to the Conference.

In the mean time, brothers *Boehm* and *Geeting* died, and brother *Otterbein* desired that another bishop should be elected, (because infirmity and old age would not permit him to superintend any longer,) who should take charge of the society, and preserve discipline and order. It was resolved, at a former Conference, that whenever one of the bishops died, another should be elected in his place: accordingly, brother *Christian Newcomer* was elected bishop, to take charge of and superintend the concerns of the society

The want of a Discipline in the society, had long been deeply felt, and partial attempts having been made at different times, it was resolved at the Conference held in the State of Ohio, that a General Conference should be held, in order to accomplish the same, in a manner, not derogatory to the word of God. The members of this Conference were to be elected from among the preachers, in the different parts of the country, by a vote of the society in general. The following brethren were duly elected, viz:—

CHN. NEWCOMER,
 ABR'M HIESTAND,
 ANDREW ZELLER,
 CHRISTIAN BERGER,
 ABRAHAM MEYER,
 JOHN SCHNEIDER,
 HENRY KUMLER,

DANIEL TREYER,
 GEO. BENEDUM,
 ABR'M TRACKSEL,
 HENRY G. SPAYTH,
 I. NIGHSWANGER,
 CHRISTIAN KRUM,
 & JACOB BOWLES.

The Conference convened on the sixth day of June, 1815, near Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland Co. Pa. After a mature deliberation, they presented to their brethren a Discipline, containing the doctrine and rules of the church, desiring that they, together with the word of God, should be strictly observed.

God is a God of order, but where there is no order, nor Church Discipline the spirit of love and charity will be lost.

Therefore, brethren, we beseech you to follow the example of our Lord; as it is written, Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Let the mind be in you which was in Christ, who took upon himself the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that by his grace we may submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God. He who will not submit is in want of humble love.—Jesus said: Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another; and whoso loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Let us walk in newness of life, that the prayer of our Lord may be answered in us; that we may be one in him; and that he may give us the glory, which he gave to his disciples, that we may be one even as he and the Father are one. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us strive to be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let no one speak or think evil of his brother, but pray God, that he may grant us his Spirit, and an earnest desire to lead a truly devoted life, to the honor and glory of his holy name: Amen.

SECTION FIRST.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

In the name of God, we declare and confess before all men, that, We believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; That these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both: That this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore, sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe in Jesus Christ: That he is very God and man: That he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the virgin Mary, and was born of her: That he is the Saviour and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus; That this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right

hand of God, to intercede for us; and that he shall come again at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is equal in being with the Father and the Son; and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

We believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

We believe that the Holy Bible, old and new Testaments, is the word of God; That it contains the only true way to our salvation: that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God, as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

We also believe, that what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam, and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

We believe that the ordinances, namely, baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use, and practised by all Christian societies: And that it is incumbent on all the children of God, particularly, to practise them; But the manner in which, ought always be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual: Also, the example of washing feet, is left to the judgment of every one, to practise or not; but it is not becoming, for any of our preachers or members to traduce any of his brethren whose judgment and understanding, in this respect, are different from his own, either in public or private. Whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect, shall be considered a traducer of his brethren; and shall be answerable for the same.

SECTION SECOND.

CONSTITUTION.

WE, the members of the Church of the UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST, in the name of God, do, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, as well as to produce and secure a uniform mode of action, in faith and practice, as also to define the powers and the business of Quarterly, Annual and General Conferences, as

recognized by this Church, ordain the following articles of CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

Sec. 1.—All ecclesiastical power herein granted, to make, or repeal any rule of Discipline, is vested in a General Conference; which shall consist of Elders elected by the members in every conference district, throughout the Society: Provided, however, such Elders shall have stood in that capacity three years, in the conference district to which they belong.

Sec. 2.—General Conference is to be held every four years; The Bishops to be considered members and presiding officers.

Sec. 3.—Each Annual Conference shall place before the society the names of all the Elders eligible to membership in the General Conference.

ARTICLE II.

Sec. 1.—The General Conference shall define the boundaries of the Annual Conferences.

Sec. 2.—The General Conference shall, at every session, elect Bishops from among the elders throughout the church, who have stood in that capacity, six years.

Sec. 3.—The business of each Annual Conference shall be done strictly according to Discipline; and any Annual Conference, acting contrary thereunto, shall, by impeachment, be tried by the General Conference.

Sec. 4.—No rule or ordinance shall at any time be passed, to change or do away the Confession of Faith as it now stands; nor to destroy the itinerant plan.

Sec. 5.—There shall be no rule adopted that will infringe upon the rights of any, as it relates to the mode of Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or the the washing of feet.

Sec. 6.—There shall be no rule made that will deprive local preachers of their votes in the Annual Conferences to which they severally belong.

Sec. 7.—There shall be no connection with secret combinations, nor shall involuntary servitude be tolerated, in any way.

ARTICLE III.

The right, title, interest, and claim, of all property, whether consisting in lots of ground, meeting houses, legacies, bequests, or donations of any kind, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by

any person or persons for the use, benefit, and behoof of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, is hereby fully recognized and held to be the property of the Church aforesaid.

ARTICLE IV.

There shall be no alteration of the foregoing constitution, unless by request of two thirds of the whole society.

May 19. 1841.

SECTION THIRD.

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Question 1st. Who are the members of the General Conference?

See Constitution.—

Qst. 2. How are they to be elected?

Ans. 1. It shall be the duty of each Annual Conference, to *appoint* a committee of three, in their several Conference Districts, to receive and count the votes, and immediately apprise those who may have been elected; also, to *furnish* the Presiding Elders with a list of all the Elders eligible

2. The Presiding Elders shall furnish each preacher in charge, whose duty it shall be to furnish each class-leader or steward, throughout the circuits, with a copy of the same, at least six months before the sitting of General Conference.

3. It shall be the duty of each class leader or steward, to appoint a meeting of the members of each class, for the purpose of electing by ballot or otherwise, one or more delegates to represent them in General Conference.

4. It shall also be the duty of each class-leader or steward, to sign, enclose, and seal, each bill of election, hand it over to the preacher in charge, who shall deliver it to the Presiding Elder, whose duty it shall be to transmit it to the committee appointed by the Annual Conference, as aforesaid.

5. Said committee shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each. And should any two or more of the candidates have an equal number of votes, the committee shall determine by lot, who, or which of them, are elected. They shall also forward the names of those elected, to the Conference Printing Establishment for publication.

Qst. 3. What shall be the number of delegates to General Conference?

Ans. Three from each Annual Conference district.

Qst. 4. How shall the expenses of the delegates to the General Conference be defrayed?

Ans. When the class-leader, or steward, takes the vote for delegates to General Conference, he shall lift a collection for that purpose, which he shall remit to the committee which are to count the votes, and the committee shall pay it over to the delegates elected.

SECTION FOURTH.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Qst. 1. Who are the members of this Conference?

Ans. All the Elders, and the licentiate preachers, who are, for the time being, in the district where the Conference is held: but, when such licentiate preachers are proposed for ordination, the Elders only shall determine the same by vote.

Qst. 2. In what manner are the transactions of a conference to be conducted?

Ans. 1. A portion of Scripture is to be read; There is also to be singing and prayer, each day, at the opening, and at the closing of Conference.

2. The conference shall elect two secretaries, one German, and one English, wherever it may be necessary. And when but one Bishop is present, the Conference shall elect a chairman to act in conjunction with the Bishop.

3. The preachers shall be examined respecting their deportment towards their fellow beings, whether their conduct in life be blameless, and whether they employ as much time as possible to promote the kingdom of God.

The following questions shall then be asked:

1. Have any of the preachers died during the last year?
2. Who are the candidates for the ministry?
3. Are any to be ordained to the office of Elder?
4. What has been collected for contingent expenses and the salary of travelling preachers?
5. Has reckoning been made with the travelling preachers?
6. Have they received their dues?
7. Who are willing to travel the ensuing year, without reserve?

8. Who are the Presiding Elders?
9. Where are the preachers stationed this year?
10. When and where shall our next Conference be held?
11. Is there any thing else to be done?
12. Is all that has been done, entered upon record?

SECTION FIFTH.

RECEPTION OF PREACHERS.

Qst How are preachers received?

Ans. Every person proposed as a preacher, shall be examined by the Conference, or a select committee; and the following questions shall be put to him, viz:

Have you known God in Christ Jesus to be a sin pardoning God, and have you obtained the forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God; and that therein is contained the true way to our salvation?

What foundation have you for that belief?

What is your motive that you desire permission to preach the Gospel?

What is your knowledge of faith, of depravity, of repentance, justification, sanctification, and redemption?

Does your own salvation and the salvation of your fellow-mortals, lie nearer to your heart than all other things in the world?

Can you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren?

Are you satisfied with our church government?

Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace, as your brethren may think expedient?

Are you willing, as much as is in your power, to assist in upholding the itinerant plan, and supporting the same as much as possible?

¶ None, however, can be admitted otherwise, than on trial: and may be admitted, or rejected without doing him any harm; otherwise it would be no trial.

SECTION SIXTH.

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

Qst. 1. Who are the members of the quarterly Conference?

Ans. All the preachers, exhorters, leaders, and stewards, who reside within the bounds of the circuit or station.

Qst. 2. What is the business of the quarterly conference?

Ans. 1. To elect a secretary whose duty it shall be to keep a correct record of all their proceedings, in a book provided for that purpose, in which the names of all the members composing the said conference, shall be entered

2. To make a general, or, if necessary, a particular enquiry into the moral deportment of all its members.

3. To receive and try all appeals, references, and complaints, that may come regularly before them.

4. To make settlement with the stewards and travelling preachers.

5. To grant license to exhort, or preach, to such person or persons, as may have been recommended by, at least two thirds of the class of which he or they are members: Provided, however, that none shall receive license, who cannot give satisfactory evidence of his or their call, experience, soundness in doctrine, and attachment to our church and government.

Qst. 3. How are preachers from other societies received?

Ans. If they come to us with certificates of good standing in the society in which they have had membership; and give satisfaction to the Quarterly Conference, of their willingness to conform to our Church Government, and usages, then the Quarterly Conference may license them till the next Annual Conference ensuing; after which if their conduct is in accordance with the Gospel of Christ, they shall be considered as preachers or elders, who stand under a similar license among us.

Qst. 4. What directions are necessary in case of appeals?

Ans. Any Exhorter, or Preacher, dissatisfied with the decision of a Quarterly Conference, shall, within thirty days after the Quarterly Conference, notify the Secretary in writing, of his intention to appeal, together with his reasons for so doing; and it shall be the duty of the Secretary to take or send a certified copy of the proceedings, the notifications and reasons assigned, to the Annual Conference.

It shall also be the duty of the quarterly Conference to open and close by singing and prayer.

SECTION SEVENTH.

MEMBERS IN GENERAL.

Qst. How shall members be taken into our society?

Ans. When, at any meeting, a person makes known a desire to become a member of our society, then the preacher present shall put to him the following question:

Have you experienced the pardon of your sins, and, are you determined by the grace of God, to save your soul?

If the person answers the question in the any affirmative, and no objection be made by any member, on account of his or her immoral conduct, then the preacher will give his right hand to such, as a member of our society, and with consent of the person, the preacher will record his or her name on the class book; but so long as any person cannot answer the above question in the affirmative, such person shall not be considered in full membership, and shall have no vote in the society.

Every member of this society shall acknowledge and confess that he believes the Bible to be and contain the holy Word of God: that he will henceforth strive, with all his heart, to seek his eternal welfare in Christ Jesus, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling, to the end that he may be enabled to *flee from the wrath to come.*

Every member shall endeavor to lead a good life, be dilligent in prayer, particularly in private, and, for his own edification, to be present at and attend to, when practicable, all meetings for worship.

Head§ of families should never omit to pray with their families, morning and evening, and to set them a good example in all the Christian virtues.

Every one should strive to walk as in the presence of God; also, to accustom himself to a close communion with God, in all his employments, and never to speak evil of his fellow beings; but to practise love towards friend and foe, to do good to the poor, and and to endeavor to be a follower of Jesus Christ *indeed.*

Every one shall keep the Sabbath day holy, as required in the word of God.—Neither buy nor sell, but spend the same in

exercises of devotion, in reading and hearing the word of God, and with singing spiritual hymns to the honor and glory of God.

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet peaceable and godly life among men, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace; and to be subject to the higher or ruling powers, as the word of God requires.

Every member of our society should willingly and freely contribute something quarterly, "as the Lord has prospered him," 1 Cor. XVI, 2, towards the support of the itinerant preachers.

The foregoing rules are drawn up for the better regulation of our society; and we believe they are founded in the word of God, and incumbent on all who are members of our Church to observe. Should any habitually neglect them, they shall be admonished, and if they do not reform they cannot continue among us.

SECTION EIGHTH.

FORMING AND MEETING CLASSES.

Whereas it is made the duty of elders and preachers to form and hold class-meetings, which should always be done in great moderation and meekness, no member will be allowed to use any means to prevent an elder or preacher in the discharge of his duty. A member doing so, shall be accountable to the next Quarterly Conference.

SECTION NINTH.

CLASSES.

I. A class shall consist of three or more members, who shall annually elect one member from their own or some other class, who shall be called their leader.

Qst. What is the duty of a leader.

Ans. It shall be his duty to meet his class in prayer-meeting or class-meeting, at least once a week; to speak to them concerning the spiritual welfare of their souls, and to exhort them to unity and love. And he shall extend the freedom of our prayer and class-meetings to all sincere and well disposed persons who may desire to attend them.

II. Every class shall annually elect one who shall be called class steward.

Qst. What is the duty of a steward?

Ans. 1. He shall collect quarterly contributions for the support of the traveling preachers; keep an accurate account thereof, and return the same to each Quarterly Conference.

2. He shall be accountable to the Quarterly Conference, for the faithful discharge of his duties as steward of his class.

Qst. What shall be done in case of immoral conduct?

Ans. The member or members complained of, or charged with immorality, shall be tried by the class to which they belong, or a select number thereof chosen by the parties concerned, with the preacher in charge of the circuit or station, who shall be chairman; and, if found guilty, the accused shall be expelled, unless satisfaction be given by an expression of repentance or otherwise. But, should any member be dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be had to the quarterly conference, by giving notice thereof to the preacher in charge. In such case, however, the same persons shall not sit in judgment, on the same case.

Qst. What shall be done when members trespass against each other?

Ans. If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but, if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

Qst. What shall be done, in case of disputes between members or preachers?

Ans. The preacher to whom it shall be known, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case, and shall recommend to the contending parties a reference consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff and another by the defendant, and a third by those two; then these three are to decide.

But, if either be dissatisfied with the decision; such may have a right to an appeal to the next quarterly Conference, for a second arbitration; where each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four shall choose a fifth; a decision of a majority of whom shall be final. Any person refusing to abide by this decision; and every member refusing, in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration when recommended to

him by a preacher or leader; or who shall enter into a law suit with another member before these measures are taken, shall be expelled; except when the case is of such a nature, as to require and justify a process at law, as executors or administrators, or when a member is in danger of suffering an unexpected loss of property.

Every class-leader shall keep a record of the proceedings of Church trials, deaths, expulsions and removals, in a book provided for that purpose; and it shall be his duty, in case of an appeal, to send said record to the Quarterly Conference.

Any person wishing to obtain license to exhort or preach, must obtain, from the class of which he is a member, by a vote of two thirds of the members, a recommendation in writing signed by the leader, to the Quarterly Conference, of his circuit or station.

SECTION TENTH.

PREACHERS' DUTIES.

Qst. What are the duties of preachers?

Ans. To preach Christ crucified, whenever he can get hearers; to form classes; to converse with the members on the spiritual condition of their souls; to seek to administer relief; to strengthen and direct those that are afflicted and labor under temptations; to animate the indolent; to endeavor as much as possible to edify and instruct all in faith, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; to visit the sick on all occasions; to strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines he delivers, by a well ordered and exemplary life.

Qst. What are the directions given to our preachers?

Ans. Be diligent. Never trifle away your time unnecessarily; always be serious; let your motto be, *holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness and jesting; converse sparingly; conduct yourself prudently with women; and demean yourself, in all respects, as a true Christian.

Be at all times averse to crediting evil reports; believe evil of no one, without good evidence; put the best construction on every thing.

2. Speak evil of no one; whatever may be your own thoughts, keep them within your own breast, till you can tell the person concerned what you think wrong in his conduct.

3d. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible.

To this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it; and act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. For as such it becomes your duty, to employ your time in the manner prescribed, in preaching and visiting from house to house, in instruction and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.

SECTION ELEVENTH.

CIRCUIT PREACHERS' DUTIES.

Qst. What are the duties of a circuit preacher?

Ans. I. To take the circuit assigned him, willingly.

2. To attend the appointments on his circuit, regularly; preach to the people; and hold society-meetings, wherever it is acceptable with the people.

3. The preacher in charge is to see that there are suitable persons appointed in each class, as stewards, leader or leaders.

4. To read the following three sections of our discipline, every six months, in each class, viz:— *The Confession of Faith; The Duty of Members; and the Duty of Leaders and Stewards.*

5. To sit as president on the trial of members, and see that a correct account of the same is kept.

6. To render a strict account of the condition of his circuit, to the Presiding Elder, at each Quarterly Conference, where he is to be held accountable for the neglect of any regular appointments on his circuit.

7. To give charge to all local agents of the Religious Telescope, to keep an account of all its subscribers in their respective neighborhoods.

8. To make settlement with the local agents, every six months, and render an account thereof to the district agent.

8. To make out a list of all the appointments on his circuit, and present it to the Presiding Elder at each Annual Conference, for the convenience of his successor.

SECTION TWELFTH.

ORDINATION OF ELDERS.

I. On the day appointed there shall be a suitable sermon or exhortation delivered.

II. After their names have been read aloud, the Bishop or Elder shall read the following articles to all who may be chosen for ordination:

An Elder must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry; not given to wine, no striker not given to filthy lucre. But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Ti. 1; 7—9.

Qst. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you the office of the ministry, to serve God in the Church of Christ, to the honor and glory of his holy name?

Ans. I trust I am.

Qst. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures; old and new Testament?

Ans. I do believe them.

Qst. Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your life according to the doctrines of Christ; and to make yourself, as much as in you lieth, a wholesome example of the flock of Christ?

Ans. I will, the Lord being my helper.

Qst. Will you obey them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, and follow their godly admonitions with a willing and ready mind.

Ans. I will endeavor, through the grace of God, so to do.

Then prayer is to be offered.

(After prayer the Bishop and Elders shall lay their hands upon the heads of every one of them, and say:)

“Take thou authority to execute the office of an Elder in the Church of God, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Amen.”

(Hereupon the Bishop or Elder shall deliver to every one of them the Holy Bible, saying:)

“Take thou authority to read and preach the word of God in the Church of Christ.”

Then the Bishop or Elder shall pray.—And after prayer he shall read from Luke, 12 C. 35 to 38, v:) Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto

him immediately.—Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.”

(After this the following benediction is to be pronounced:)

The peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord: Amen.

SECTION THIRTEENTH.

ELDERS, THEIR ELECTION, ORDINATION AND DUTY.

Qst. How is an Elder constituted?

Ans. After a probation of three years, a preacher may be presented to the yearly Conference, for consideration; and if on examination by the Conference, he should be chosen as an Elder, he may, by the imposition of hands, be ordained by a Bishop and two Elders. It shall, however, be the privilege of an Annual Conference, to grant a permit to licentiates, to perform the ordinance of baptism, and administer the sacrament where circumstances make it necessary.

2. What is the duty of an Elder?—To preach as often as he can, and to baptise; and assist the Presiding Elder to administer the Lord's supper; but when the Presiding Elder cannot attend, then one or two Elders shall perform this duty; he shall also perform all parts of divine worship; endeavor to establish and hold class-meetings, and assist in the election of leaders and stewards.

3. Where a local Elder or preacher, who does not suffer want himself, preaches at a place, where no travelling preacher comes to, he shall make collections—take a catalogue thereof, and bring or send it to the Presiding Elder or to the Conference, for the support of needy preachers who preach among poor people.

4. Should a traveling Preachers or Elder desire to leave the district assigned him, he must first acquaint the Presiding Elder of his intention by writing; and should any one leave or neglect his station, except it be through sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, he shall be accountable to the next annual Conference, and shall not be entitled to any salary for the time he may have traveled during the year.

6. Where there are preachers found to be settled at a place, who are poor and indigent, and yet required to preach, it is reasonable and just that the Elders should provide for their support in proportion to the time they may be employed, and by making a collection for their benefit among the societies in their District; though not to exceed the sum fixed and allotted to the traveling preachers.

SECTION FOURTEENTH

PRESIDING ELDERS--ELECTION AND DUTY.

Qst. How are the Presiding Elders to be elected?

Ans. They shall be elected by the Annual Conferences, from among the elders, for one year.

Qst. What are the duties of a Presiding Elder?

Ans. 1. To travel through the District appointed him; and to preach as often as he can.

2. He is to take charge of the traveling and local preachers in his district; and to see that they conduct themselves as becometh the Gospel.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and camp meetings; and, if possible, attend them: he shall hold Quarterly Conferences with the preachers, exhorters, leaders and stewards, and administer the ordinances of God's house: he shall enquire and examine whether the traveling and local preachers do their duty; and particularly, whether the local preachers, when practicable, preach every Sabbath. And where there are several, he is at times, to change them as may seem most beneficial, and to exhort them to maintain discipline and order, love and seriousness in the society.

4. He can also, in conjunction with two elders, preachers, exhorters, or leaders, (one from each circuit,) change the preachers in his district. Should any circuit be found without a traveling preacher, it shall be his duty to employ a preacher to travel on that circuit until the next Annual Conference.

5. And should any district happen to be without a Presiding Elder, information shall immediately be given to a Bishop, who shall appoint an elder to preside in said district, until the ensuing Annual Conference.

SECTION FIFTEENTH.

BISHOPS--ELECTION AND DUTIES.

Qst. How are the Bishops to be elected?

Ans. The General Conference shall elect them by a majority of votes; yet, the Conference may, at their option retain the former Bishops four years longer. The newly elected, however, as well as those retained, must be capable of attending the conferences appointed them; otherwise they cannot be elected.

Qst. What are the duties of Bishops?

Ans. 1. To preside over the Annual and General Conferences.

2. In conjunction with the Presiding Elders, of the past and present years, they are to fix the appointments of the traveling preachers for the several circuits: Provided, that they do not allow any itinerant preacher to remain in the same station or circuit more than three consecutive years; unless particular circumstances require it; and then only, with the consent of the Conference.

3. The Bishops in conjunction with two elders appointed by Conference, shall point out the districts which are to be traveled by the Presiding Elders.

4. They are to attend to and oversee the spiritual concerns of the Church.

5. It is incumbent on them to perform the rites of ordination.

6. When a Bishop ceases or neglects to attend the several Conferences committed to his charge, he cannot be suffered to retain his office; unless prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances.

7. If our Church should, at any time, be destitute of a Bishop, a Chairman shall be elected from among the elders at each Annual Conference. Each Chairman shall attend the next succeeding Conference, in conjunction with the Chairman there elected; that a regular correspondence be maintained until the ensuing General Conference.

8. It shall be the duty of the Bishops to see that a suitable sermon be delivered to the preachers present at each Annual Conference.

SECTION SIXTEENTH.

IMMORAL CONDUCT OF PREACHERS.

Qst. What shall be done when a Bishop, Presiding Elder, or preacher, is reported of being guilty of immorality?

Ans. When a Bishop is thus accused, it shall be the duty of a Presiding Elder and an Elder after being duly notified, to enquire into and examine whether it is founded in truth. But as the apostle says: "Receive not an accusation against an Elder, but before two or three witnesses," 1. Tim. V. 19., they shall not arraign him on mere vague reports; but if it appears that he is justly accused, they shall arraign him; take down their proceedings in writing, and send a copy thereof to the Bishop accused, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and the accused shall meet; where the case shall be tried by two Presiding Elders and three Elders: and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace until the sitting of the Annual Conference next ensuing, who shall again examine and try the said case. And if again found guilty, he shall be suspended or expelled, as the case may require.

2. When a Presiding Elder is thus accused, it shall be the duty of the nearest Elder and a preacher, to enquire into and examine the same; and if the accused be found guilty, they shall take down their proceedings in writing and send the accused a copy thereof, and appoint a time and place where the accusers and the accused shall meet; and in the absence of the Bishop, another Presiding Elder and two Elders, shall examine the charge; and if he is found guilty, he shall hold his peace, until the next Annual Conference; where he shall be accountable.

3. When an elder or preacher is charged with immoral conduct, the preacher to whom it is known, shall take with him another preacher exhorter, or leader, and examine into the charge: Should he be found guilty, notice thereof shall be given him, and a time and place appointed where the accusers and the accused shall meet. Then three elders or preachers shall try his case, who are to be appointed by the parties concerned, each party appointing one, and the two a third; and if he be convicted, he shall hold his peace, till the Annual Conference, where he shall be accountable. But should sufficient satisfaction be given, in either of the foregoing cases, by an

expression of repentance, or otherwise, they may be retained, if considered expedient. But should the accused Preacher, Elder or Bishop refuse to attend, after having been notified of the time and place of trial, he shall be suspended; and the committee shall notify him to appear at the next quarterly or Annual Conference, to answer to the charges preferred against him; and if he fails to attend, (sickness or unavoidable circumstances excepted,) he shall be suspended or expelled, as conference may think proper.

SECTION SEVENTEENTH.

PREACHERS' SALARIES.

1. The annual allowance of a traveling Bishop, or Preacher, if he has no family, shall be one hundred dollars, and his traveling expenses, if he has a family, it shall be two hundred dollars, his traveling expenses, and house rent not exceeding forty dollars.

2. When a traveling preacher has a family of children, the Quarterly Conference of his Circuit, is, in that case, to grant him such an allowance in addition to that above stated, as in their judgment, will supply the wants of his family.

Qst. What shall be done for the needy, superannuated or worn out, traveling preachers, and for their widows and orphans?

Ans. The dividend falling to the different Conferences from the benevolent fund, shall be appropriated to their support.— Provided it be strictly observed that the Benevolent Fund money shall not be appropriated to any other purpose.

If there are no such claimants as the above specified, it shall be retained by the Conference from year to year, until such cases do occur. And in case the Annual Conference shall, upon evidence received, be satisfied that there are such claimants, it shall be the duty of Conference to appoint a committee, one of whom shall be a Bishop, to divide said fund. Provided, however, that a superannuated preacher shall be allowed no more annually, than one hundred and fifty dollars, if married, and no more than seventy-five dollars, if unmarried: widows, no more, annually, than seventy-five dollars: and an orphan, no more than twenty, while under twelve years of age.

Preachers' Presents.—Every traveling preacher in our society shall yearly account to the Conference for all the presents he may

have received on his circuit to the amount of one dollar or more, for the use of himself or family. And if the Conference be satisfied that any circuit has given presents instead of collections, or that the preacher endeavored to get such, in place of collections, in such case, presents shall be considered collections, by the Conference. But, if on examination, this should not appear, then those preachers having received presents shall hold them as their own; and in addition, receive all the discipline allows them.

SECTION EIGHTEENTH.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

ADDRESS.

We are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together N. and M. as husband and wife, if any persons present know any just cause or impediment why these persons should not be joined in marriage, let the same now speak, or for ever hereafter keep silent.

(If no impediment be alleged, then shall the minister say unto the man:)

N. Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love, honor, and comfort her, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live. If so then answer, *Yes*. (Then shall the Minister say to the woman:) M. wilt thou have this man, to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance. Wilt thou love, honor and obey him, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live. If so, then answer, *Yes*.

(Then the Minister shall require them to join their right hands together, and say:)

Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

In as much as N. and M. have consented together in marriage; and have witnessed the same before God and these witnesses, I pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost: Amen.

SECTION NINETEETH.

NECESSITY OF UNION AMONG OURSELVES.

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known,) of the evil of a division in principle spirit or practice; and of the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we are divided, we shall injure ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.
2. Pray earnestly for, and speak truly and freely to each other.
3. When we meet let us never part without prayer.
4. Take great care not to despise each others gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of each other.
6. Let us defend each other's characters, in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labor, in honor, each, to prefer another before himself.
8. We recommend a serious examination of the causes, evils and cures of heart and church divisions.

SECTION TWENTIETH.

VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, AND ENFORCING PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Qst. How can we further assist those under our care?

Ans. 1. By instructing them at their own houses; which is necessary to promote confidence and communion with God among us, to wean us from the love of the world, and to inure us to a life of heavenly mindedness; also, to encourage us to strive after and practise brotherly love, that no evil thinking or judging of one another be found among us; and lastly that we may learn to do, as we would wish to be done unto.

2. Every preacher should make it his duty to instruct the people on every occasion, both public and private; and exhort them to be dilligent in all good works and doctrine. Until this be done and that in sincerity, we shall, upon the whole, be of but little use, and our good shall be evil spoken of; therefore, wherever we may be we should guard against useless and idle conversation.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house, and exhorting the people, is found or implied in these solemn words of the Apostle:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. 2. Tim. IV. 1. 2.

SECTION TWENTY-FIRST.

INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

Let him who is in any way zealous for God and the souls of men, begin the work without delay. Wherever children are found, meet them as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them, earnestly yet simply and plainly, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth.

SECTION TWENTY-SECOND.

DOCTRINAL PUBLICATIONS.

No one of our preachers or laymen, shall become the author of any Doctrinal Book or pamphlet, in a printed form without the approbation of the Annual Conference, or of a committee chosen by the same. And if any preacher or layman violates this rule, he shall be accountable to the class, or to the Quarterly or Annual Conference, as the case may be.

SECTION TWENTY-THIRD.

OATHS.

We believe that the mode of testifying to the truth, when required so to do, in a legal form, by way of affirmation, is on us solemnly, conscientiously, and fully binding before God to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

SECTION TWENTY-FOURTH.

ARDENT SPIRITS.

The distilling and vending of ardent spirits shall hereafter be forbidden throughout our whole society. Should any preacher, exhorter, leader, or layman, from and after the next Annual Conference in 1842, be engaged in distilling or vending ardent spirits, he shall be accountable to the class, the Quarterly or Annual Conference to which he belongs, as the case may be. If the offending brother be an exhorter, leader, or layman, it shall be the duty of the preacher in charge, to admonish him in meekness; if he be a preacher, it shall be the duty of the Presiding Officer of a Quarterly or Annual Conference to admonish him to desist from his unholy employment; and if all friendly admonitions fail, such offending person or persons shall no more be considered as members of our church, but be expelled from the same.—Provided, however, that this rule shall not be so construed, as to prevent druggists and others from vending for medicinal or mechanical purposes.

SECTION TWENTY-FIFTH.

FREE MASONRY.

Free Masonry, in every sense of the word, shall be totally prohibited, and in no wise tolerated in our society. And should any of our members continue to attend their lodges, or join as a member, in any Masonic procession, or otherwise join a Masonic fraternity, he shall, for so doing, be excluded from our church.

SECTION TWENTY-SIXTH.

SLAVERY.

All slavery, in every sense of the word, is totally prohibited, and shall in no way, be tolerated in our church. Should any be found in our society, who hold slaves, they cannot continue as members, unless they do personally manumit or set free such slaves.

SECTION TWENTY-SEVENTH.

RULES AND REGULATIONS, OF OUR PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT
IN CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO.

RULE I.

1st. The above establishment shall be called the Conference Printing Establishment of the United Brethren In Christ.

2d. The legislative authority, herein granted, is vested in the General Conference of said Church; whose duty it is, to make or amend any rules, as in their judgment, may seem expedient.

3d. It shall be the duty of General Conference, to appoint or elect three Trustees, every four years; and also, to employ an Editor and Treasurer.

4th. If a vacancy should occur in the Editorial or Treasury Department, it shall be the duty of the Trustees to employ some other suitable person or persons, to fill said vacancy, until the sitting of the next General Conference.

5th. In case a vacancy in the Board of Trustees should occur, it shall be the duty of the remaining two, to appoint a third person, to fill the vacancy, until the sitting of the next General Conference.

6th. The proceeds of said establishment, over and above contingent expenses, shall be applied to the traveling and worn out preachers, and their widows and orphans, to be equally divided annually, among the different Annual Conferences.

RULE II.

1st. It shall be the duty of the Trustees, to make settlement with the Treasurer and Editor, every six months; and cause the Treasurer to make out a report to each Annual Conference, of the Scioto District; and also, to make a special report to each General Conference.

2d. It shall be the duty of the Scioto Annual Conference, in the interval of the sessions of the General Conference, to see that the Editor, Treasurer and Trustees discharge their official duties as required.

3rd. On impeachment of any of the above named officers it shall be the duty of the above named Annual Conference, to examine into said impeachment; and if guilty, in their opinion,

to dismiss them and supply the vacancy, until the sitting of the next General Conference.

RULE III.

1st. It shall be the duty of the Editor, to pay *strict* attention to all communications sent for insertion; to revise them, if necessary, and then insert them. But, if he should receive any, which, in his opinion, are repugnant to the doctrine and rules of our church, he shall present them to the Treasurer, or to one or more of the trustees; and if rejected by them, they shall be withheld; otherwise, inserted.

2nd. It shall be the duty of the Editor, to write editorial for each number of the paper; and to attend strictly to the reading of proof-sheet, making selections, &c.

3d. It shall be the duty of the Editor to keep a general oversight over the hands in the office; and to see that they do not spend their time in idleness.

4th. The Trustees shall have a general oversight over the Editor and Treasurer, and see that they discharge their duty; and if they do not they may be suspended, until the sitting of the next Annual Conference, which shall determine the matter; in which case said Trustees shall supply the vacancy for the time being.

RULE IV.

1st. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to take charge of the temporal concerns of the office; to keep all the books pertaining thereunto; to furnish, at the direction of the Trustees, such materials as may be needed at all times; and to act as general book-agent under the instruction of said Trustees.

2d. The Treasurer, when not employed in his official duties, shall work in the office as a hand.

3d. The Trustees shall have privilege to make any by-laws, that may seem expedient to them, for the better regulation of the minor concerns of the office: provided, they do not violate any part of the above rules.

SECTION TWENTY-EIGHTH.

BOOK AGENCY

1st. There shall be a Book Agent appointed in each Annual Conference district, whose duty it shall be to take charge of all

books sent to him by the Treasurer of, and appertaining to, the Conference Printing Establishment in Circleville Ohio.

2d. Said Agent shall be accountable to the Treasurer of said establishment.

3d. It shall be his duty, so far as may be safe or expedient, to distribute to the circuit preachers, for the use of the church, all the books that may be sent to him by the Treasurer.

4th. Said Agent shall keep an accurate account of all the distributions of books, and collections of money, for and in behalf of, said establishment. If books are wanted in his district, he is to notify the Treasurer by letter.

5th. Said Agent shall make settlement with the Treasurer, by letter or otherwise, every six months.

SECTION TWENTY-NINTH.

ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN BUILDING MEETING HOUSES.

Qst. Is any thing advisable in regard to the building of Meeting Houses?

Ans. Let all our meeting houses be built plainly and neatly with free seats, and not more expensive than necessary.

Qst. To whom are our meeting houses, and the premises belonging to them, to be deeded?

Ans. To a board of Trustees, and their successors in office, in trust, as the property of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Qst. How is a board of Trustees constituted?

Ans. Whenever it is contemplated, by a society, to purchase or to build a Meeting House, it shall be the duty of a leader or steward of such society, to make it known to the Quarterly Conference of the Circuit or station to which he belongs, whose duty it shall be to appoint a judicious board of Trustees, of not less than three in number. Provided however, that none be required to serve more than four years, unless indispensably necessary. No person shall be considered eligible as a Trustee for any of our Meeting Houses, who is not a regular member of our Church.

Qst. How are the Trustees to proceed in building a house?

Ans. They shall form an estimate of the amount necessary to procure a lot, to build, and to make such other improvements

as may be conceived necessary. However, they shall not commence building, until two thirds of the money according to such estimate shall have been secured or subscribed and also a lawful title for the lot upon which they intend to build.

To hold annual meetings and keep a fair and regular record of the transactions of their Board, in a book provided for that purpose, which shall at all times be open for inspection by the Quarterly Conference of said circuit or station.

To take care of the meeting house property, furniture, premises, burial ground, &c.

Qst. What shall be done when a vacancy or vacancies occur in the Board of Trustees?

Ans. It shall be the duty of the Quarterly Conference to appoint a suitable person or persons, to fill such vacancies.

Qst. What shall be done when any of our houses are vacant?

Ans. It shall be the duty of a Quarterly Conference of the nearest circuit to appoint, not less than three suitable persons for Trustees, who shall have the power, when authorized by two thirds of the members of that Conference, to lease, rent or sell, such meeting house, and the appurtenances belonging to it; and to appropriate the money arising from such lease, rent, or sale, to what said Conference may direct.

NOTE.—The trustees should be careful, in all cases, to have deeds of conveyance legally executed, and recorded in the county records where the property is: that is; to have the deed made to them and to their successors in office, in trust for, the Church of the United Brethren In Christ and, to erect and build or cause to be built, a house of worship for the use of the members of said Church.

SECTION THIRTIETH.

CERTIFICATES.

Members of our society moving to other places and seeking admission there, shall procure such a certificate as this; signed by a leader or preacher. "This is to certify that A. B. is a member of good standing, in the church of the United Brethren In Christ, at

(Date, &c.)

Preachers removing from one Conference district to another, shall when they apply to another Conference for admission, produce a transfer from the Conference to which he formerly belonged.

CORRECTION.

In the second article of Constitution, page 14, read—

“Sec. 8.—The right of appeal shall be inviolate.”

[This section appears to have been overlooked by the Secretaries.]

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CERTIFICATION.

I HEREBY certify that the English form of the Discipline prior to 1815 and of the Disciplines of 1815 and 1817, as contained in this volume, is a correct translation of the original German text.

DAYTON, OHIO, August 26, 1895.

A. W. DRURY.

I hereby certify that the English Disciplines from 1819 to 1841 inclusive, as contained in this volume, are a faithful reproduction of the originals, including errors of orthography, punctuation, capitalization, and typography.

DAYTON, OHIO, August 26, 1895.

W. A. SHUEY.

PART II.
DISCIPLINES IN GERMAN,
1814 - 1819, 1841.

Die Lehre der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Artikel 1. Im Namen Gottes bekennen wir vor Jedermann, daß wir glauben an den Einigen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und heiligen Geist, daß diese drey Eins sind, der Vater im Sohn, der Sohn im Vater, und der heilige Geist gleiches Wesen, mit beiden, daß dieser Gott, Himmel und Erden, und alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, und alles traget, regiret, schicket und erhält.

Art. 2. Wir glauben an Jesum Christum, daß er wahrer Gott und Mensch, Heiland und Versöhner, der ganzen Welt ist, daß alle menschen durch ihn selig werden können, wenn sie wollen, das dieser Jesus, für uns gelitten, gestorben und begraben, am dritten tage wieder auferstanden, gen Himmel gefahren, und am jüngsten tage, wieder kommen wird, zu richten die lebendigen und die toden.

Art. 3. Wir glauben an den heiligen Geist, das er vom Vater und Sohn ausgehe, daß wir durch ihn müssen geheiligt werden, und den Glauben erlangen, welcher uns reiniget von Aller besetzung des fleisches und des geistes.

Art. 4. Wir glauben das die Bibel Gottes wort ist, daß sie den wahren weg zu unserm seelenheil und seligkeit enthalte, das ein jeder wahrer Christ, dieselbe, mit den einflüssen des geistes-Gott, Einzig und allein zu seiner richtschnur nehmen müsse, und das ohne huse und glauben, an Jesum Christum vergebung der sünden, und nachfolge Jesu Christi, niemand ein wahrer Christ seyn kann.

Art. 5. Wir glauben das die Lehre, welche die heilige schrift enthält, nämlich der fall in Adam, und die errettung durch Jesum Christum der ganzen Welt geprediget und verkündiget werden solte. Außere Zeichen, und verordnungen nämlich die taufe, und das gedächtnis des Herrn, in austheilung des brods und Weins, werden anempfohlen, wie auch das fußwaschen, wo es begehret wird.

Nun dan die Regeln der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Art. 1. Nur solche brüder, sollen von den vereinigten Brüder in Christo, als ihre prediger anerkannt werden, welche sich zu dem ende bey ihrer Conferenz, oder einer großen versammlung angemeldet finden, bey derselbigen, ordentlich, Examenirt werden, und folgendes beantwortet, ob er an Christum Glaube, ob er die vergebung seiner sünden Empfangen, ob er dem frieden und der heiligung nachjage, ob ihm sein eigen heil, mit dem heil seiner nebenmenschen am herzen liege, ob er dem rath der brüder sich unterwerfen will, solche sollen eine schriftliche erlaubniß erlangen.

Art. 2. Solche Prediger sollen in der Conferenz bischöffe erwählen, durch die mehrheit der stimmen, auf drey jahr.

Was sind die Bischöfliche Pflichten.

Art. 3. Itens. in der Conferenz, als Präsident vorzusitzen, 2tes. soll er das recht haben, mit beystimmung der Conferenz zu agiren. 3tens. durch zustimmung der Conferenz ist ihm freiheit gegeben älteste zu Erwählen.

Art. 4. Gegen wen sind die bischöffe und älteste und prediger wegen sitten mitrigem betragen verantwortlich? gegen die allgemeine Conferenz, wo aber das betragen gegen die bibel ist, daß zeigen da sind hinlänglich, so soll der dem es bekant ist, noch mehr prediger zu sich nehmen, und es untersuchen, ist es gegen die Bibel, so soll derselbige schweigen biß zur Conferenz.

Art. 5. Ein jeder prediger soll allen fleiß anwenden, die gemeinde so viel als möglich zu erbauen mit lehr, und leben, mit gebäth und gottseeligem wandel, er soll sich bestreben, mit allen gliedern seiner gemeinde bekant zu werden, so das er dieselben kan bey namen nennen, und wo es möglich, von ihrem seelenzustand mit ihnen reden.

Art. 6. In jeder gemeinde sollen vorgenger ermehlet werden, deren pflicht soll seyn anfang und ende oder beschluß zu machen in den bätstunden und privatstunden, also die Kranken zu besuchen und ein jedes glied der gemeinde zu ermahnen und in liebe zu erhalten und auf sich selbst sehen.

Art. 7. Ein jedes glied der gemeinde soll bekennen, daß es die Bibel für Gottes wort halte, das es sich von nun an von herzen bestrebe, sein heil zu suchen in Christo, und seine seeligkeit zu schaffen mit furcht und zittern, und dem Ewigen zorn gottes zu entfliehen..

Art. 8. Ein jedes soll sich bestreben, einen genauen und gottseeligen wandel zu führen, fleißig seyn im gebät besonders im verborgenen und wo möglich allen versamlungen beydes öffentlichen gottesdienst und betstunden zu seiner erbauung beywohnen.

Art. 9. Häubter in familien, sollen es nicht verseumen, des morgends, und des abends mit den ihrigen zu baten, denselben ein gutes Exempel setzen, in allen christlichen tugenden.

Art. 10. Ein jedes glied soll sich bestreben, genau als in der gegenwart gottes zu wandeln, bey seinen geschäften an einen genauen umgang mit gott gewöhnen, liebe üben gegen freunde und feinde, den armen gutes thun, und suchen in der that, ein Nachfolger Jesu Christi zu sein.

Art. 11. Ein jedes glied soll sich starkes enthalten, und es nur zu noth, als arzeney, und metezin gebrauchen.

Art. 12. Ein jedes glied wird sich enthalten, Sontags geschäfte zu treiben, zu kaufen und verkaufen sondern soll denselben in andacht, mit singen geistreicher lieder, zur und lob gottes zubringen.

Art. 13. Ein jedes dieser gemeinde sollte vierteljährlich, aus freiem willen, so viel beytragen, als es seine umstände erlauben und die reisenden prediger zu unterstützen.

Art. 14. Es ist pflicht eines jeden glied dieser gemeinde, ein friedliches, stilles, und gottseeliges leben zu führen, in dem umgang mit allen menschen, wie es einem Christen gezimet, in frieden zu leben, absonderlich soll jedes, der Obrigkeit, und den gesetzten des landes gehorchen, den die obrigkeit ist von gott verordnet.

Art. 15. Wenn sich streitigkeiten ereignen solten, zwischen zwey oder mehren glieder der gemeinden, von wegen schulden, oder irgend einer andern ursach, und die streidenten partheien, zu keinem vertrag kommen können, so soll der prediger welcher die aufficht über die gemeinde hat die Sache untersuchen, und den streidenten partheien eine referenz anempfehlen, dieselben soll aus drey glieder der gemeinde bestehen, wovon der kläger einen, der beklagte den andern, und diese drey sollen die zwistigkeiten schlichten. In fall aber eines der streidenten personen mit diesem ausspruch unzufrieden seyn sollte, so mag es sich an die nächste große versammlung wenden, es den

predigern befangt machen und um eine zweyte friedensschlichtung anhalten, und wenn die prediger hinlänglich ursach dazu finden so sollen sie eine zweyte friedensschlichtung ertheilen, in welchem fall, eine jede der partheien zwey glieder aus der gemeinde, und diese vier den fünften erwählen sollen, die sollen den ausspruch der zwistigkeiten gänzlich entscheiden, sollte aber einer der personen, mit diesem ausspruch doch nicht zufrieden sein, so schlisset er sich damit aus der gemeinde aus, und wenn sich ein glied der gemeinde weigern sollte, von wegen schulden, oder andere zwistigkeiten, die Sache zu schlichten zu lassen, nach dem es ihm von den predigern welche die aussicht über die gemeinde haben anempfohlen worden oder ein glied der gemeinde gerichtlich belangen sollte ehe die vorhergehende maßregeln genommen worden. so soll dasselbe von dieser gemeinde ausgeschlossen seyn, Es seye den daß streitigkeiten von der art wären, daß sie eine gerichtliche entscheidung erfordere und rechtfertigte.

Christofel Grosch und Christian Reutommer.

Lehre

und

Zucht = Ordnung

der

Bereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Hägers-Tann :

Gedruckt bey Johann F. Koch.

Von dem
U r s p r u n g
der
Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

In dem lezt verfloffenen Jahrhundert, hat es dem Herrn unseren Gott gefallen, in verschiedenen Gegenden der Welt Männer zu erwecken, die den verfallenen Christenthum wieder aufhelsen, und die Lehre Christi vom Kreuz, in ihrer Lauterkeit verkündigen sollten.

Er gedachte dabey auch der Deutschen in Amerika, welche hin und wieder, in diesem sich ausgebreiteten Lande lebten; daher nur selten Gelegenheit hatten, die Predigt des Evangeliums vom Kreuz zu hören um sich zu erbauen, und nur selten in ihrer Muttersprache, und an manchen Orten nicht in der Lauterkeit und im Ernst vorgetragen wie es sollte.

Unter andern mehr, erweckte er auch einen Otterbein, einen Böhm, und einen Gütling; rüstete sie aus mit Geist, Gnade und Kraft, in seinem so sehr vernachlässigten Weinberge zu arbeiten, um auch unter den Deutschen in Amerika, Sünder zur Buße zu rufen. Diese folgten dem Ruf ihres Herrn und Meisters, arbeiteten im Segen und errichteten hin und wieder herrliche Gemeinden, und führten Christo manche edle Seele zu. Nach und nach erweiterte sich ihr Wirkungstreiß, daß sie dabey genöthiget waren, sich um Mitarbeiter im Weinberg umzusehen; denn die Erndte war so groß, und der Arbeiter nur wenig. Gott erweckte andere die er auch willig machte, ihre Kräfte dem Herrn zu widmen. Solche wurden dann von einem oder dem andern als Mitarbeiter angenommen und von ihnen zum Predigt-Amte bestimmt.

Die Anzahl der Gemeindeglieder in den verschiedenen Gegenden wuchs von Zeit zu Zeit, und verbreitete sich in den Staaten von Maryland, Pennsylvanien und Virginien. Daher hat Otterbein auf den großen Versammlungen zu Zeiten Conferenz gehalten, mit den Predigern die gegenwärtig waren. Er hat ihnen die Wichtigkeit im Predigt-Amt vorgestellt; wie nöthig es sey, allen Ernst anzuwenden, um Seelen zu retten; sie hielten dabey Rath wie sie am nützlichsten seyn könnten, und nahmen solche auf zu Mitarbeitern, von denen sie Ursach hatten zu glauben, daß sie das Christenthum am Herzen erfahren hatten; die treu waren und geübte Sinnen hatten; diese rüsteten sie zu, zum Werk des Herrn. Die Anzahl der Glieder vermehrte sich immer mehr und mehr. Um jetzt recht nützlich und gemeinschaftlich zu arbeiten, sahen sich die Prediger verpflichtet eine Conferenz zu bestimmen, wo sie zusammen kämen, um sich recht zu vereinigen; denn einige waren Reformirte, andere Lutheraner, andere Menonisten, u. s. w., daher bestimmten sie den 25ten September, 1800, in Friedrich County, Maryland, im Hause des Friedrich Kemp zusammen zu kommen. Es kamen ihrer dreyzehn zusammen und vereinigten sich in eine Gesellschaft, die den Namen führt: „Die vereinigten Brüder in Christo“; sie erwählten Wilhelm Otterbein und Martin Böhm, zu Oberaufsehern oder Bischöffen; sie wurden einig einem jeden die Freyheit zu lassen, zu Laufen, nach eines jeden Erkenntniß.

Von nun an verbreitete sich die Gemeinde immer mehr und mehr; sie nahmen Prediger an die immer reisten (denn die Predigt Plätze konnten sonst nicht bedient werden;) das Werk verbreitete sich in den Staaten von Ohio und Kentucky. Es war jetzt nöthig eine Conferenz im Staat Ohio zu halten, indem es zu beschwerlich war jährlich so weit nach der Conferenz zu gehen.

Der Bruder Böhm starb unterdessen, und Bruder Otterbein begehrte daß ein Bischof sollte gewählt werden, weil er nicht mehr selbst nachsehen konnte, der das Werk über sich nehme, damit Zucht und Ordnung gehalten würde; denn es war auf der ersten Conferenz ausgemacht, daß wenn einer von den Bischöffen sterben würde, daß ein anderer erwählt werden sollte. Da ward Bruder Christian Neucommer als Bischof auf eine Zeit erwählt, der die Aufsicht über sich nehme über die Gemeinschaft.

Schon lange wurde der Mangel einer Zuchtordnung in der Gemeinde tief empfunden; es war schon mehrmal etwas daran gethan worden; endlich wurde auf der Conferenz im Staat Ohio beschloffen: daß eine Haupt oder General Conferenz gehalten werden sollte, die es über sich nehme, die Zuchtordnung in etwas vollständiger zu machen, wie sie sich für die Gemeinde schicken würde.

Die Glieder zu dieser Conferenz sollten aus den Predigern, in den unterschiedlichen Gegenden, durch die Glieder der Gemeinde gewählt werden, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen; und es waren die folgenden Prediger gegenwärtig auf der Conferenz, nemlich: Christian Neucommer, Abraham Hiestand, Andreas Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Tractsel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, Johannes Schneider, Heinrich Kumlter, Heinrich Späth, Isaac Neuschwander, Christian Krum, und Jacob Baulus. Die versammelten sich am 6ten Juni, 1815, nahe bey Mount Pleasant, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvanien, wo sie nach reifer Ueberlegung, die folgende Lehre und Regeln für gut und nützlich befanden, sie der Gemeinde in Liebe und Demuth zu übergeben, mit dem herzlichem Wunsch, daß diese Lehre und solche Regeln, nebst dem Worte Gottes möchten beobachtet werden. Denn Gott ist ein Gott der Ordnung, und wo keine Ordnung und Kirchenzucht ist, da verliert sich alle Liebe und Gemeinschaft; daher laßt uns dem Rath des Herrn folgen der uns lehrt, daß wir durch Demuth einer den andern höher achten als uns selbst, suchen gesinnt zu sein wie Jesus Christus auch war, der Knechts Gestalt angenommen, ward gehorsam bis zum Tode am Kreuz, um uns die Gnade und Kraft zu erwerben, daß wir uns aus Liebe und Demuth einer dem andern unterwerfen könnten; wer sich nicht unterwerfen kan, dem mangelt noch Gnade, Liebe und Demuth; daher sagt Jesus: wer unter euch der Größte seyn will, der soll des andern Diener seyn, so müssen wir einander lieben; daran, sagt Jesus: wird jedermann erkennen, daß ihr meine rechte Jünger seyd, so ihr Liebe habt, und wer nicht lieb hat der bleibt im Todte. So laffet uns Liebe üben, auf daß wir die Herrlichkeit besitzen mögen, die Jesus seinen Jüngern von seinem Vater erbeten hat, daß wir eins seyn möchten, wie er und der Vater eins sind. Darum ihr lieben Brüder, laffet uns suchen gleichgesinnet, einhellig und einträglich zu seyn, und keins Uebel von dem andern reden oder denken, sondern den Herrn ansehen, daß er uns seinen Geist und Ernst geben möchte um das Christenthum recht zu seiner Ehre zu führen, und zu unserem ewigen Wohl Amen.

Erster Abschnitt.

Daß Glaubens-Bekennniß der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Im Namen Gottes bekennen wir vor jedermann, daß wir glauben an den einen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiligen Geist, daß diese Drey Eins sind, der Vater im Sohn, der Sohn im Vater und der Heilige Geist gleiches Wesen mit beyden. Daß dieser dreyeinige Gott Himmel und Erden und alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, trägt, regiert, schützt und erhält.

Wir glauben an Jesum Christum, daß er wahrer Gott und Mensch ist, daß er seine menschliche Natur durch den Heiligen Geist in Maria angenommen, und von ihr gebohren; daß er Heiland und Versöhner des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechts ist. Wenn sie die in Jesu angebotene Gnade im Glauben an ihn annehmen; daß dieser Jesus für uns gelitten hat, am Stamme des Kreuzes gestorben, begraben, am dritten Tage wieder auferstanden, gen Himmel gefahren, welcher ist zur Rechten Gottes und vertritt uns; und wieder kommen wird, am jüngsten Tage, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Todten.

Wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist, daß er gleiches Wesens mit dem Vater und dem Sohn, daß er von beyden ausgeht, daß wir durch ihn erleuchtet, durch den Glauben gerechtfertigt und geheiligt werden.

Wir glauben an eine Heilige Gemeinde, Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, Auferstehung des Fleisches und ein ewiges Leben.

Wir glauben das die Bibel altes und neues Testament, Gottes Wort ist; daß sie den wahren Weg zu unserer Seligkeit enthalte, daß ein jeder wahre Christ, dieselbe mit den Einflüssen des Geistes Gottes einzig und

allein zu seiner Richtschnur nehmen soll, und daß ohne Glauben an Jesum Christum, wahre Buße, Vergebung der Sünden und Nachfolge Christi, niemand ein wahrer Christ seyn kann.

Wir glauben daß die Lehre welche die Heilige Schrift enthält, nemlich: den Fall in Adam und die Erlösung durch Jesum Christum, der ganzen Welt sollte gepredigt werden.

Wir glauben daß die äußere Gnaden-Mittel in den Gemeinden Christi geübt werden sollten, nemlich: die Taufe und das Gedächtniß des Todes des Herrn, in Austheilung des Brods und Weins, die sollen nach dem Befehl des Herrn Jesu, unter seinen Kindern geübt werden; die Art und Weise soll aber einem jeden nach seiner Erkenntniß überlassen werden. Auch das Beyspiel von Fußwaschen stehet einem jeden frey.

Zweyter Abschnitt.

Von der

Haupt- und Jährlichen-Conferenz

Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung, sollen die Verhandlungen auf den Conferenzen vorgenommen werden?

Es wird verlangt, daß, was auch immer bey dieser Gelegenheit gethan wird, soll so gethan werden als ob es in der Gegenwart Gottes wäre; wer zu reden hat der stehe auf und rede frey, wie ers in seinem Herzen hat.

Wie und auf was Art, sollen die Glieder einer Haupt-Conferenz gewählt werden?

In einem jeden Distrikte sollen die reisenden Prediger, wenn solche da sind, wenn nicht, so sollen die sesshaften Prediger die in dem Bezirk wohnen, es den Gemeinden vorstellen, daß sie zwey Aeltesten aus ihrem Bezirk wählen; es sollen aber alle die Aeltesten die in dem Bezirk sind die auf die Conferenz gehen können, auf die Wahl thun, und es einige Zeit vorher bekannt machen, und die zwey die die Mehrheit der Stimmen bekommen, sollen die Glieder von der Haupt-Conferenz seyn; die Stimmen sollen aber an jedem

Orte, schriftlich aufgezeichnet werden, und von einem anwesenden Prediger, oder von einem Vorgänger unterschrieben werden. Der Aufsichtsälfeste im Bezirk soll es untersuchen, und sollten zwey von ihnen eine gleiche Anzahl Stimmen haben, so soll er entscheiden welcher von ihnen erwählt ist.

Wie oft soll die Haupt-Conferenz gehalten werden ?

Alle vier Jahre.

Hat die Haupt-Conferenz eine andere Gewalt, die die Jährliche nicht hat ?

Ja, sie hat allein die Gewalt einen Bischof, aus den Aufsichtsälfesten, auf vier Jahre zu wählen; und auch diese Zuchtordnung oder Regeln zu verändern oder zu verbessern, nachdem sie es für gut befindet unter den Bedingungen und ausnahin, daß kein Artikel gemacht werde, der den Circuit zu bereisen aufhebt oder wegthut. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll auch die Districte bestimmen, wo die jährlichen Conferenzen gehalten werden sollen.

Welches sind die Glieder der jährlichen Conferenz ?

Alle die Ältesten und Prediger, die einen schriftlichen Erlaubnißschein empfangen haben, und die in dem Bezirk von einer solchen Conferenz sind, oder in solchen aufgenommen werden.

Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung sollen die Verhandlungen vorgenommen werden ?

1. Es wird zuerst ein Capitel aus der Bibel verlesen, und kurze Anmerkung darüber gemacht, alsdann wird gesungen und gebeten, und das so oft als die Conferenz sitzt; und mit gesang und gebet beschloffen.

2. Die Conferenz soll einen Aufsichtsälfesten und einen Schreiber wählen, um mit dem Bischof zu agiren.

3. Werden die Prediger untersucht, wie ihr Betragen gegen Gott, gegen einander und gegen ihren Nebenmenschen sey; ob ihr Wandel untadelhaft, ob sie so viel Zeit wie möglich anwenden um das Reich Gottes auszubreiter

4. Was für Prediger sind auf die Probe anzunehmen ?

5. Was für Prediger müssen ferner auf der Probe bleiben ?

6. Sind einige zu Ältesten zu wählen ?

7. Sind wohl einige von den Predigern gestorben ?

8. Welches sind die Aufsichtsälfesten ?

9. Wer giebt sich auf zu reisen ?

10. Was ist gesammelt worden, theils zufällige Ausgaben zu bestreiten, und den reisenden Predigern ihren Gehalt aufzumachen? ist Rechnung mit ihnen gehalten worden? haben sie das ihrige bekommen ?

11. Wann und wo soll die nächste Conferenz gehalten werden ?

12. Sind die Ältesten geordinirt worden ?

13. In was für Bezirke sind die Prediger dieses Jahr angestellt ?
14. Ist noch etwas mehr zu thun ?
15. Hat die Conferenz die Distrikte bestimmt in ihrem Bezirk, um die Wahl für die Glieder der Haupt-Conferenz zu halten ?
16. Ist alles was verhandelt worden, in das Protokoll über getragen worden ?

Dritter Abschnitt.

Von der Wählung und Ordination des Bischofs und von seinem Amt und Pflicht

Wie soll ein Bischof eingesetzt werden ?

Die Haupt-Conferenz soll ihn wählen, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen, aus den Aufsichtsältesten, die zu der Haupt-Conferenz gewählt sind; auch steht es der Conferenz frey, den Bischof noch auf vier Jahre beyzubehalten. Der gewählte oder Bischof muß aber die unterschiedlichen Bezirke und Conferenzen bereisen können, sonst kan er nicht gewählt werden; der so gewählte soll von einem Bischof und einem Aufsichtsältesten durch Auflegung ihrer Hände ordinirt werden; sollte aber kein Bischof da seyn, so sollen es zwey Aufsichtsältesten thun.

Was sind dem Bischof seine Pflichten ?

1. Bey unseren Conferenzen als Vorsitzer zu agiren, mit einem dazu erwählten Aufsichtsältesten.

2. Er hat mit zwey Aufsichtsältesten, die er wählen darf, den reisenden Predigern ihre verschiedenen Bezirke anzuweisen, doch mit der Einschränkung,

oafß kein Prediger länger als drey Jahre nach einander in einem gestattet werde, an dem nemlichen Orte zu bleiben, es sey denn, in Hinsicht auf Familien Umstände, und mit Bewilligung der Conferenz, sollen keine Schranken auf die Zeit gesetzt sein.

3. Der Bischof zeigt den Aufsichtsaltesten ihren Bezirk an, den sie zu bereisen haben.

4. In der zwischen Zeit, von der Conferenz, hat er mit den Aufsichtsaltesten in seinem Bezirk, Gewalt, die reisenden Prediger zu verwechseln, wo sie es für besser ansehen, auch Prediger aufzunehmen, oder zu suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Er hat die verschiedenen Conferenzen, so weit sie sich erstrecken, zu bereisen, und hat im geistlichen, die Oberaufsicht über alle Gemeinden.

6. Ihm steht es zu, die Ordination zu vollziehen.

7. Wenn ein Bischof aufhört die verschiedenen Conferenzen zu bedienen in der Gemeinschaft und die Bezirke zu bereisen, kann er doch sein bischöfliches Amt unter uns ausüben? Nein, es sey denn daß er krank wäre und was dergleichen Umstände mehr seyn möchten.

8. Wenn es sich zutragen sollte, daß unsere Gemeinschaft zu einer Zeit keinen Bischof hätte, weil er entweder gestorben oder suspendirt wäre, oder wie es immer seyn mag; wie soll rath geschafft werden? Jede jährliche Conferenz wählt sich einen Vorsitzer aus den Aufsichtsaltesten; dieser soll die Bischofs Stelle so lange bedienen, als die Conferenz währt; dieser so gewählte Vorsitzer, soll auch die andere Conferenz bedienen; er soll seinen Sitz, mit dem dort gewählten Vorsitzer nehmen, um mit ihm in der Conferenz zu agiren, und der dort gewählte Vorsitzer, soll eben so, die andere Conferenz auch bedienen, damit eine jede Conferenz weiß, wie es bey der andern aussieht; und daß Liebe und Gemeinschaft erhalten werde, u. s. w. bis zur Haupt-Conferenz, die wieder einen Bischof wählt.

Bierter Abschnitt.

Von den Aufsichtsältesten, ihrer Wahl, Amt und Pflichten.

Wie sollen die Aufsichtsältesten gewählt werden?

Der Bischof soll der Conferenz einige aus den Ältesten, die ihre Probzeit ausgehalten, vorschlagen, und mit Zustimmung der Conferenz auf zwey Jahre wählen.

1. Was sind die Pflichten des Aufsichtsältesten? den ihm angewiesenen Bezirk zu bereisen, und so oft zu predigen als er kan.

2. Er hat die Uebersicht über die Reisenden und sesshaften Prediger, in seinem Bezirk, daß sie sich dem Evangelium gemäß betragen.

3. Er soll die vierteljährliche und große Versammlung bestellen, und wo möglich bedienen; das Abendmahl halten, und vierteljährlich Conferenz halten, mit den gegenwärtigen Predigern und Ermahnern und Vorgängern; es untersuchen ob die reisenden und sesshaften Prediger ihre Pflicht thun, besonders ob die sesshaften Prediger wo möglich alle Sonntag predigen, und wo mehrere sind sie zu Zeiten zu verwechseln, wie am meisten Nutzen geschafft wird; sie ermahnen, daß die Zucht, und Ordnung und Liebe und Ernst bey den Gemeinden erhalten.

4. Er kann auch die reisenden Prediger in seinem Bezirke verwechseln; er soll aber dem Bischof mit zu Rath ziehen; er kann auch Prediger aufnehmen oder suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Er soll dem Bischof Nachricht geben, wie es in seinem Bezirk aussieht, und mit dem reisenden Prediger Rechnung halten, um es der Conferenz vorzulegen. Er soll einem Ledigen achtzig Thaler erlauben und einem Verhehlchten und seiner Frau, noch so viel. Nur reisende Prediger die den Bezirk bereisen, sind zu dem berechtigt; die sesshaften bekommen nichts, es ey denn, daß einer eine Zeitlang den Bezirk bedienen würde, so darf ihn für die Zeit erlaubt werden; wo aber ein Prediger in einer Stadt stehen sollte, da muß die Gemeinde ihn versorgen.

6. Wie lange mag der Bischof einen Aufsichtältesten über den nemlichen Bezirk setzen? So lange es für nützlich und schicklich gehalten wird.

7. Sollte es sich so zutragen, daß zu einer Zeit kein Bischof da wäre, so sollen die Aufsichtältesten, ein jeder in seinem Bezirk besonders auf die Gemeinden acht haben, damit alles in Liebe und Ernst erhalten werde, und einer dem andern Nachricht gebe, wie es in seinem Bezirk ausfiehet. Sollte es sich aber zutragen, daß kein Aufsichtältester in dem oder jenem Bezirk wäre, wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Es soll dem Bischof Nachricht davon gegeben werden; dieser soll einen von den Ältesten, im Bezirk, dazu bestimmen,

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(Fünfter Abschnitt.)

Von den Ältesten und ihrer Wahl, Amt und Pflicht und Ordination.

Wie soll ein Ältester gewählt werden?

Nach einer zwey jährigen Prob-Zeit, mag er von der jährlichen Conferenz angenommen werden, und durch den Bischof und

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er kann und zu taufen, Ehen einzusegnen, helfen dem Aufsichtältesten das Abendmahl halten, und wenn der Aufsichtälteste nicht gegenwärtig seyn kann, so soll es ein oder zwey Ältesten thun; er soll alle Theile des öffentlichen Gottesdienstes verrichten, Classen-Versammlungen suchen zu errichten, wo es thunlich ist, sie auch halten, und helfen Vorgänger zu erwählen.

2. Vierteljährlich eine freywillige Collection zu heben, für die reisenden Prediger und für Arme; ein Verzeichniß davon zu nehmen, an jedem Ort und von dem

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3. Wo ein sechshafter Aeltester oder Prediger an einem Ort predigt, wo kein Reisender hin kommt, so soll er die Collection heben, und ein Verzeichniß ebenso davon nehmen, und es dem Aufsichtsältesten zuschicken, oder zur Conferenz schicken oder bringen.

4. Sollte ein reisender Prediger oder Aeltester, seinen ihm angewiesenen Bezirk verlassen wollen, so soll er zuvor dem Aufsichtsältesten schreiben; sollte einer ihn etwa verlassen oder versäumen, es sey dann durch Krankheit oder sonst unvermeidliche Umstände, so soll er der nächsten Conferenz verantwortlich dafür seyn.

Sechster Abschnitt.

Von der Weise Prediger aufzunehmen, und ihrem Amt und Pflichten.

Wie soll ein Prediger aufgenommen werden, durch die jährliche Conferenz?

1. In der zwischen Zeit von der Conferenz, durch den Bischof, oder den Aufsichtsältesten des Bezirks, oder eines Aeltesten, der den Platz eines Aufsichtsältesten vertritt auf einer jährlichen oder großen Versammlung, bis zur nächsten Sitzung der Conferenz; keiner wird anders als auf Probe angenommen, einer der auf Probe angenommen ist, mag beybehalten oder abgewiesen werden, ohne daß ihm einigcs Unrecht geschehen würde, sonst wäre es keine Probe.

2. Eine jede Person die als Prediger vorge schlagen wird, soll von der Conferenz untersucht werden, und ihm folgende Fragen vorgelegt werden:

Hat er Gott in Christo als einen vergebenden Gott erkannt?

Hat er Vergebung seiner Sünden erlangt?

Ist die Liebe Gottes durch den heiligen Geist, in Dein Herz ausgegossen worden?

Hat er den Frieden Gottes erlangt?

Saget er der Heiligung nach?

Hat er eine richtige Erkenntniß, v. Glauben, von Buße, von Rechtfertigung, und Heiligung, und Erlösung?

3. Liegt ihm sein eigen Heil, und das Heil deines Nebenmenschen mehr am Herzen, als sonst alles andere in der Welt?

Kann er sich dem Rath seiner Brüder unterwerfen?

Will er gehorsam seyn, zu reden oder schweigen, wie es die Brüder für gut erkennen?

Ist er willig, so viel als in seinem Vermögen steht, den reisenden Plan (oder den Bezirk zu bereisen) helfen aufrecht zu halten und ihm so viel wie möglich unterstützen?

4. Was ist die Pflicht eines Predigers?

Christum den getreuwigten zu predigen, wo sich nur Zuhörer einfinden; Classen Versammlung aufrichten, wo es thunlich ist, mit ihnen von ihrem Seelen-Zustande zu reden, die angefochtenen suchen zurecht zu weisen, die Trägen suchen aufzumundern, und alle im Glauben in der Gnade und Erkenntniß Jesu Christi suchen zu erbauen, so viel wie möglich; nie unterlassen die Kranken zu besuchen, und mit seinem Leben und Wandel suchen seine Worte zu bekräftigen was er geprediget.

5. Welche Anweisungen werden einem Prediger gegeben? Er sey fleißig, nie verliere er seine Zeit an unnöthigen Dingen, an einigem Ort, immer sey er ernsthaft, sein Denkpruch sey dem Herrn geheiligt, er meide allen Leichtsinn, und Scherzen, er rede bescheiden, und habe behutsamen Umgang mit dem weiblichen Geschlecht, und betrage sich als ein wahrer Christ.

6. Er sey immer abgeneigt Beschuldigungen zu glauben, es sey denn hinlänglich erwiesen er lege alles so viel es mit der Wahrheit bestehen mag zum besten aus.

Er rede von niemand nichts Uebels, was er je von einem denken mag, behalte er solches bey sich selbst, bis er es demjenigen selbst, dem es angeht, sagen kann.

7. Sein Geschäft sey, Seelen zu retten so viel wie möglich; zu diesem Geschäfte gebe er sich auf. Er besuche die es bedürftig sind; in allen Dingen handele er nicht nach seinen eigenen Gutdenken, sondern als ein Sohn des Evangeliums, als ein solcher steht es ihm zu seine Zeit, so wie diese Vorschrift lautet: mit Predigen, mit Hausbesuchen, mit Lehren und Beten, und Betrachtung des Wortes Gottes zuzubringen damit gehe er um, bis der Herr kommt.

Siebenter Abschnitt.

Von dem Sittenlosen Betragen der Prediger, wie mit ihnen soll verfahren werden.

Was soll gethan werden, wenn von einem Bischof, oder Aufsichtsältesten, oder Ältesten, oder Prediger, die Nachricht einkommt, als habe er sich eines Verbrechens schuldig gemacht, das im Worte Gottes, als eine ausschließende Handlung geboten sey?

1. Wenn ein Bischof wegen Sittenlosen Betragen beschuldigt wird, wie soll mit ihm verfahren werden? Wo sich Beschuldigung ereignen sollte, die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wäre, so soll es einem Aufsichtsältesten und einem Ältesten bekannt gemacht werden, die sollen es untersuchen, ob etwas an der Sache sey; sie sollen aber keine Klage außer zwey oder drey Zeigen annehmen, als wie der Apostel sagt: scheint es nun, daß er mit recht beschuldigt wird, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Bischof eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen wo sie zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Bischof gegenwärtig seyn sollen, und soll durch zwey Aufsichtsältesten und drey Ältesten untersucht werden; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur jährlichen Conferenz; da sollen die Aufsichtsältesten und Ältesten es noch ein Mal untersuchen, wird er schuldig gefunden so soll er vom Amt suspendirt werden.

2. Wenn ein Aufsichtsalteste wegen Sittenlosen Betragen beschuldigt würde, was soll gethan werden? Wo sich Beschuldigungen ereignen sollten die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wären, so soll es der nächste Aufsichtsalteste und ein Prediger untersuchen; zeigt es sich nun als ob er schuldig wäre, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Aufsichtsaltesten eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen wo sie sollen zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Aufsichtsalteste gegenwärtig seyn; in Abwesenheit des Bischofs, soll ein anderer Aufsichtsalteste und zwey Aeltesten gerufen werden, die sollen es untersuchen; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, da soll er verantwortlich seyn.

3. Wenn ein Aeltester oder Prediger oder Ermahner sollte beschuldigt werden, wegen Sittenlosen-Betragen, was soll gethan werden? Der Prediger in der Gegend dem es bekannt wird, soll noch einen Prediger oder Ermahner oder einen Vorgänger mit sich nehmen, und es untersuchen; sollte es scheinen daß er schuldig wäre, so soll ihm Nachricht davon gegeben werden, und eine Zeit bestimmt werden, wo sie, die Kläger und der beschuldigte gegenwärtig seyn; in Abwesenheit des Bischofs oder Aufsichtsaltesten: sollen es drey Aeltesten oder Prediger untersuchen, wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, wo er verantwortlich soll seyn.

Achter Abschnitt.

Von den

Gliedern Insgemein.

Ein jedes Glied der Gemeinde sollte bekennen, daß es die Bibel für Gottes Wort halte; daß es sich von nun an von Herzen bestrebe, sein Heil in Christo Jesu zu suchen, und seine Seeligkeit zu schaffen mit Furcht und Zittern, um den zukünftigen ewigen Zorn zu entfliehen.

Ein jedes Glied soll sich bestreben einen genauen und gottseligen Wandel zu führen; fleißig seyn im Gebet, besonders im Verborgenen; und wo möglich allen Versammlungen beywohnen, beydes öffentlichen Gottesdienst und Betstunden, zu seiner Erbauung.

Häupter in Familien sollten es nie veräumen des Morgens und Abends mit den Ihrigen zu beten, und denselben ein gutes Exempel setzen, in allen christlichen Tugenden.

Ein jedes soll sich bestreben, genau als in der gegenwart Gottes zu wandeln; sich bey seinen Geschäften an einen genauen Umgang mit Gott gewöhnen; nie Uebel von seinem Nebenmenschen reden; Liebe üben gegen Freund und Feind, den Armen gutes zu thun, und suchen in der That ein Nachfolger Jesu Christi zu seyn.

Ein jedes Glied sollte sich enthalten, Sonntags unnöthige Geschäfte zu treiben; nichts zu kaufen noch zu verkaufen, sondern soll denselben in Andacht mit Lesen und hören des Worts Gottes, mit singen geistreicher Lieder zur Ehre und Lob Gottes zu bringen.

Ein jedes Glied in dieser Gemeinschaft sollte vierteljährlich aus freyem Willen so viel beytragen, wo es seine Umstände erlauben, um die reisenden Prediger zu unterhalten.

Es ist einem jeden Gliede seine Pflicht, ein friedliches stilles und gottseliges Leben zu führen, im Umgang mit allen Menschen, wie es einem Christen geziemt, im Frieden zu leben; absonderlich soll jedes der Obrigkeit unterthan seyn, so wie Gottes Wort es fordert.

By solchen Gliedern der Gemeinde, sollen die Prediger eine oder mehrere Classen-Versammlungen errichten wo es thunlich ist; daselbst sollen sich die Glieder, wo es seyn kann, ein Mal in jeder Woche versammeln, an dem dazu bestimmten Ort, um Bestunden mit einander zu halten, um sich zu erbauen in der gegenwart Gottes und in Liebe zu guten Werken in Christo Jesu.

In jeder Classe sollten Vorgänger in gegenwart des Predigers gewählt werden, deren Pflicht soll seyn, die bestunden bestellen, anzufangen, und zu beschließen, auch zu Zeiten Classen-Unterredungen zu halten, ein jedes Glied zu ermahnen und in Liebe erhalten, und auf sich selbst sehen.

Wenn Glieder sich an einander versündigen als Brüder oder Schwestern, so strafe es zuerst zwischen Dir und Ihm allein, höret er dich so hast du ihn gewonnen, hört er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwey zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehe aus zweyer oder dreyer Zeigenmunde; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde, höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner.

Wenn sich Streitigkeiten ereignen sollten, zwischen zwey oder mehreren Gliedern der Gemeinde, von wegen Schulden oder irgend einer andern Ursache, und die streitenden Partheien zu keinem Vertrag kommen können, so

soll der Prediger welcher die Aufsicht über die Gemeinde hat, oder der Prediger der in der Gegend wohnt, die Sache untersuchen, und den Streitenden eine Referenz anempfehlen; dieselbe soll aus drey Gliedern der Gemeinde bestehen, wovon der Kläger einen, der Beklagte den andern, und diese zwey den dritten erwählen sollen, diese drey sollen dann die Zwistigkeiten schlichten. Im Fall aber eine der streitenden Personen mit diesem Ausspruch unzufrieden seyn sollte, so mag sie sich an die nächste vierteljährliche oder große Versammlung wenden es dem Aufsichtsaltesten oder Aeltesten bekannt machen, um eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung anhalten, und wenn die Prediger hinlänglich Ursach dazu finden, so sollen sie eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung ertheilen; in welchem Fall eine jede der Partheyen zwey Glieder aus der Gemeinde, und diese viere, den fünften erwählen sollen; diese sollen den Ausspruch der Zwistigkeiten gänzlich entscheiden; sollte aber eine der Personen mit diesem Ausspruch doch nicht zufrieden seyn so schließt er sich damit aus; ein Glied der Gemeinde sich weigert son
wegen Schulden oder andern Zwistigkeiten, die Sache schlichten zu lassen, nachdem es ihm von einem Prediger oder Vorgänger, welche die Aufsicht haben, anempfohlen worden, oder ein Glied von der Gemeinde vor Gericht ziehen sollte ehe die vorhergehende Maaßregeln genommen worden, so soll dasselbe von dieser Gemeinde ausgeschlossen seyn, es sey denn, daß Streitigkeiten von der Art wären, daß sie eine gerichtliche Entscheidung erfordern und rechtfertige, als: Executoren oder Administratoren.

L e h r e

u n d

Z u c h t = O r d n u n g

d e r

Bereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Dieses gedruckt auf Anordnung einer Haupt-Conferenz, gehalten den zweiten Tag Juny, im Jahr unsers Herrn, 1817, in Mountpleasant, Westmoreland County, Penn.

G r ü n s b u r g, (Penns).

Gedruckt bey Johannes Armbrust u. Co.

Von dem
U r s p r u n g
der
Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

In dem lezt verfloffenen Jahrhundert, hat es dem Herrn unserm Gott gefallen, in verschiedenen Gegenden der Welt Männer zu erwecken, die dem verfallenen Christenthum wieder aufhelfen, und die Lehre vom Kreuz, in ihrer Lauterkeit verkündigen sollten.

Er gedachte dabey auch der Deutschen in Amerika, welche hin und wieder in diesem sich ausgebreiteten Lande lebten; daher nur selten Gelegenheit hatten, die Predigt vom Kreuz zu hören um sich zu erbauen, und nur selten in ihrer Muttersprache, und an manchen Orten nicht in der Lauterkeit und im Ernst vorgetragen wie es sollte.

Unter andern mehr erweckte er auch einen Otterbein, einen Böhm, und einen Gütthing; rüstete sie aus mit Geist, Gnade und Kraft, in seinem so sehr vernachlässigten Weinberge zu arbeiten, um auch unter den Deutschen in Amerika, Sünder zur Buße zu rufen. Diese folgten dem Ruf ihres Herrn und Meisters, arbeiteten im Segen, und, so errichteten sie, hin und wieder herrliche Gemeinden, und führten Christo manche edle Seele zu. Nach und nach erweiterte sich ihr Wirkungskreis, daß sie dabey genöthiget waren, sich um Mitarbeiter im Weinberg umzusehen; denn die Erndte war so groß, und der Arbeiter nur wenig. Gott erweckte andere die auch willig wurden, ihre Kräfte dem Herrn zu widmen. Solche wurden dann von einem oder dem andern als Mitarbeiter angenommen.

Die Anzahl der Gemeindeglieder in den verschiedenen Gegenden wuchs von Zeit zu Zeit, und verbreitete sich in den Staaten von Virginien. Daher hat Otterbein auf den großen Versammlungen zu Zeiten Conferenz gehalten,

mit den Predigern die gegenwärtig waren. Er hat ihnen die Wichtigkeit im Predigt-Amt vorgestellt; wie nöthig es sey, allen Ernst anzuwenden, um Seelen zu retten; sie hielten dabey Rath wie sie am nützlichsten seyn könnten, und nahmen solche auf zu Mitarbeitern, von denen sie Ursach hatten zu glauben, daß sie das Christenthum am Herzen erfahren hatten. Die Anzahl der Glieder vermehrte sich immer mehr und mehr. Um jetzt recht nützlich und gemeinschaftlich zu arbeiten, sahen sich die Prediger verpflichtet eine Conferenz zu bestimmen, wo sie zusammen kämen, um sich recht zu vereinigen; denn einige waren Reformirte, andere Lutheraner, andere Mennonisten u. s. w., daher bestimmten sie den 25ten September 1800 in Friedrich County, Maryland, in dem Hause des Friedrich Kemp zusammen zu kommen. Es kamen ihrer dreyzehn zusammen, nemlich:

W. Otterbein,	C. Grosch,
J. Böhm,	D. Strickler,
J. Gütting,	C. Crum,
C. Neucommer,	H. Crum,
P. Lehman,	A. Hershey,
G. Pfrimmer,	
P. Kemp,	

sie vereinigten sich in eine Gesellschaft, die den Namen führt: „Die vereinigten Brüder in Christo“; sie erwählten Wilhelm Otterbein und Martin Böhm, zu Oberaufsehern oder Bischöffen; sie wurden einig einem jeden die Freyheit zu lassen, zu taufen nach eines jeden Erkenntniß.

Von nun an verbreitete sich die Gemeinde immer mehr und mehr; sie nahmen Prediger an die immer reisten (denn die Predigt Plätze konnten sonst nicht bedient werden); das Werk verbreitete sich in den Staaten von Ohio und Kentucky. Es war jetzt nöthig eine Conferenz im Staat Ohio zu halten, indem es zu beschwerlich war, für jene Prediger jährlich so weit nach der Conferenz zu gehen.

Der Bruder Böhm starb unterdessen, und Bruder Otterbein begehrte, daß ein Bischof sollte gewählt werden, (weil er nicht mehr selbst nachsehen konnte,) der das Werk über sich nehme, damit Zucht und Ordnung gehalten würde; denn es war auf der ersten Conferenz ausgemacht, daß wenn einer von den Bischöffen sterben würde, daß ein anderer erwählt werden sollte. Da ward Bruder Christian Neucommer als Bischof auf eine Zeit erwählt, der die Aufsicht über sich nehme über die Gemeinschaft.

Schon lange wurde der Mangel einer Zuchtordnung in der Gemeinde tief empfunden; es war schon mehrmal etwas daran gethan worden; endlich

wurde auf der Conferenz im Staat Ohio beschloffen: daß eine Haupt oder General Conferenz gehalten werden sollte, die es über sich nehmen, die Buchordnung in etwas vollständiger zu machen, so wie sie dem Worte Gottes gemäß sind.

Die Glieder zu dieser Conferenz sollten aus den Predigern, in den unterschiedlichen Gegenden, durch die Glieder der Gemeinde gewählt werden durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen; und es waren die folgenden Prediger gegenwärtig auf der Conferenz, nemlich: Christian Neucommer, Abraham Hiestand, Andreas Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Be: edum, Abraham Trachsel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, Johannes Schneider, Heinrich Kumlcr, Heinrich Späth, Isaac Neuschwander, Christian Krum, und Jakob Baulus. Die versammelten sich am 6ten Juny, 1815, nahe bei Mountpleasant, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvanien, wo sie nach reifer Ueberlegung, die folgende Lehre und Regeln für gut und nützlich befanden, sie der Gemeinde in Liebe und Demuth zu übergeben mit dem herzlichen Wunsch, daß diese Lehre und solche Regeln, nebst dem Worte Gottes möchten beobachtet werden. Denn Gott ist ein Gott der Ordnung, und wo keine Ordnung und Kirchenzucht ist, da verliert sich alle Liebe und Gemeinschaft; daher laßt uns dem Rath des Herrn folgen der uns lehrt, das wir durch Demuth einer den andern höher achten als uns selbst, suchen gesinnt zu seyn wie Jesus Christus auch war, der Knechts Gestalt angenommen, ward gehorsam bis zum Tode am Kreuz, und uns die Grade und Kraft zu erwerben, daß wir uns aus Liebe und Demuth einer dem andern unterwerfen könnten; wer sich nicht unterwerfen kann, dem mangelt noch Gnade, Liebe und Demuth; daher sagt Jesus: wer unter euch der Größte seyn will, der soll des andern Diener seyn; soll einer des andern Diener seyn, so müssen wir einander lieben; Jesus sagt: also wird jedermann erkennen, daß ihr meine rechte Jünger seyd, so ihr Liebe habt, und wer nicht lieb hat der bleibt im Todte. So laffet uns Liebe üben, auf daß wir die Herrlichkeit besitzen mögen, die Jesus seinen Jüngern von seinem Vater erbeten hat, daß wir eins seyn möchten, wie er und der Vater eins sind. Darum ihr lieben Brüder, laffet uns suchen gleich gesinnet, einhellig und einträchtig zu seyn, und keins Uebel von dem andern reden oder denken, sondern den Herrn anflehen, daß er uns seinen Geist und Ernst geben möchten um das Christenthum recht zu seiner Ehre zu führen, und zu unserem ewigen Wohl Amen.

Erster Abschnitt.

Das Glaubens-Bekennniß der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Im Namen Gottes bekennen wir vor jedermann, daß wir glauben an den einigen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiligen Geist, daß diese Drey Eins sind, der Vater im Sohn, der Sohn im Vater und der Heilige Geist gleiches Wesen mit beyden. Daß dieser dreyeinnige Gott Himmel und Erden und alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, trägt, regiert, schützt und erhält.

Wir glauben an Jesum Christum, daß er wahrer Gott und Mensch ist, daß er seine Menschheit durch den Heiligen Geist in Maria angenommen, und von ihr geboren; daß er Heiland und Versöhner des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechts ist. Wenn sie die in Jesu angebotene Gnade im Glauben an ihn annehmen; daß dieser Jesus für uns gelitten hat, am Stamme des Kreuzes gestorben, begraben, am dritten Tage wieder auferstanden, gen Himmel gefahren, welcher ist zur rechten Gottes und vertritt uns; und wieder kommen wird, am jüngsten Tage, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Todten.

Wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist, daß er gleiches Wesens mit dem Vater und Sohn, daß er die Gläubige tröste und sie in alle Wahrheit leite.

Wir glauben an eine Heilige christliche Gemeinde, Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, Auferstehung des Fleisches und ein ewiges Leben.

Wir glauben das die Bibel altes und neues Testament, Gottes Wort ist; daß sie den wahren Weg zu unserer Seligkeit enthalte, daß ein jeder wahre Christ, dieselbe mit den Einflüssen des Geistes Gottes einzig und allein zu seiner Richtschnur nehmen soll, und daß ohne Glauben an Jesum Christum, wahre Buße, Vergebung der Sünden und Nachfolge Christi, niemand ein wahrer Christ seyn kann.

Wir glauben daß die Heilige Schrift enthält, nemlich: den Fall in Adam und die Erlösung durch Jesum Christum, der ganzen Welt solle geprediget werden.

Wir glauben daß die äußere Mittel in den Gemeinden Christi geübt werden sollten, nemlich: die Taufe und das Gedächtniß des Todes des Herrn Jesu, unter seinen Kindern geübt werden; die Art und Weise soll aber einem jeden nach seiner Erkenntniß überlassen werden. Auch das Beyspiel von Fußwaschen, stehet einem jeden frey.

Zweyter Abschnitt.

Von der Haupt- und Jährlichen-Conferenz.

Fr. Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung, sollen die Verhandlungen auf den Conferenzen vorgenommen werden?

Antw. Es wird verlangt, daß, was auch immer bey dieser Gelegenheit gethan wird, soll so gethan werden, als ob es in der Gegenwart Gottes wäre; wer zu reden hat der stehe auf und rede frey, wie ers in seinem Herzen hat.

Fr. Wie und auf was Art, sollen die Glieder einer Haupt-Conferenz gewählt werden?

Antw. In einem jeden Distrikte sollen die reisenden Prediger, wenn solche da sind, wenn nicht, so sollen die seßhaften Prediger, die in dem Bezirk wohnen es den Gemeinden vorstellen, daß sie zwey Aeltesten aus ihrem Bezirk wählen; es sollen aber alle die Aeltesten die in dem Bezirk sind die auf die Conferenz gehen können, auf die Wahl thun, und es einige Zeit vorher bekannt machen; und die zwey die die Mehrheit der Stimmen bekommen, sollen die Glieder von der Haupt-Conferenz seyn; die Stimmen sollen aber an jedem Orte, schriftlich aufgezeichnet werden und von einem anwesenden Prediger, oder von einem Vorgänger unterschrieben werden. Der Aufsichtsälteste im Bezirk soll es untersuchen, und sollten zwey von ihnen eine gleiche Anzahl Stimmen haben, so soll er entscheiden welcher von ihnen erwählt ist.

Fr. Wie oft soll die Haupt-Conferenz gehalten werden?

Antw. Alle vier Jahre.

Fr. Hat die Haupt-Conferenz eine andere Gewalt, die die Jährliche nicht hat?

Antw. Ja, sie hat allein die Gewalt zwey Bischöffe aus den Aeltesten, auf vier Jahre zu wählen; und auch die Zuchtordnung oder Regeln zu verändern oder zu verbessern, nachdem sie es für gut befindet; unter den Bedingungen und Ausnahm, daß kein Artikel gemacht werde, der den Circuit zu beweisen aufhebt oder wegthut. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll auch die Distrikte bestimmen, wo die jährlichen Conferenzen gehalten werden sollen.

Fr. Welches sind die Glieder der jährlichen Conferenz?

Antw. Alle die Aeltesten und Prediger, die einen schriftlichen Erlaubnißschein empfangen haben, und in dem Bezirk von einer solchen Conferenz sind, oder in solchen aufgenommen werden.

Fr. Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung sollen die Verhandlungen vorgenommen werden?

Antw. 1. Es wird ein Capitel aus der Bibel verlesen, und kurze Anmerkung darüber gemacht, alsdann wird gesungen und gebeten, und das so oft als die Conferenz sitzt; und mit Gesang und Gebet beschloffen.

2. Die Conferenz soll einen Schreiber und sollte einer der Bischöffe abwesend seyn, auch einen der Aufsicht's-Aeltesten zum mit agieren wählen.

3. Werden die Prediger untersucht, wie ihr Betragen gegen ihren Nebenmenschen sey; ob ihr Wandel untadelhaft, ob sie so viel Zeit wie möglich anwenden um das Reich Gottes auszubreiten.

4. Was für Prediger sind auf die Probe anzunehmen?

5. Was für Prediger müssen ferner auf die Probe bleiben?

6. Sind einige zu Aeltesten zu wählen?

7. Sind wohl einige von den Prediger gestorben?

8. Welches sind die Aufsicht's-Aeltesten?

9. Wer giebt sich auf zu reisen?

10. Was ist gesammelt worden, theils zufällige Ausgaben zu bestreiten, und den reisenden Predigern ihren Gehalt aufzumachen? ist Rechnung mit ihnen gehalten worden? haben sie das ihrige bekommen?

11. Wann und wo soll die nächste Conferenz gehalten werden?

12. Sind die Aeltesten geordinirt worden?

13. In was für Bezirke sind die Prediger dieses Jahr angestellt?

14. Ist noch etwas mehr zu thun?

15. Hat die Conferenz die Distrikte bestimmt in ihrem Bezirk, um die Wahl für die Glieder der Haupt-Conferenz zu halten?

16. Ist alles was verhandelt worden, in das Protokoll übertragen worden?

Dritter Abschnitt.

Von der Wählung und Ordination der Bischöffe und von ihrem Amt und Pflicht.

Fr. Wie sollen die Bischöffe eingesetzt werden ?

Antw. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll sie wählen, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen, Aeltesten, die zu der Haupt-Conferenz gewählt sind; auch steht es der Conferenz frey, sie die Bischöffe noch auf vier Jahre bezzubehalten. Die Gewählte oder Bischöffe müssen aber die unterschiedlichen Bezirke und Conferenzen bereisen können, sonst können sie nicht gewählt werden; die so gewählte sollen von einem Bischof und einem Aeltesten durch Auflegung ihrer Hände ordinirt werden; sollte aber kein Bischof da seyn, so sollen es zwey Aelteste thun.

Fr. Was sind der Bischöffe ihre Pflichten ?

Antw. 1. Bey unsern Conferenzen als Vorsitzer zu agieren.

2. Sie haben mit einem Aeltesten, den wählen sie, den reisenden Predigern ihre verschiedenen Bezirke anzuweisen, doch mit der Einschränkung, daß kein reisender Prediger länger als drey Jahre nach einander in einem gestattet werde, an dem nemlichen Orte zu bleiben, es sey denn, in Hinsicht auf besondern Umstände, und mit Bewilligung der Bischöffe.

3. Die Bischöffe zeigen den Aufsichtsältesten ihren Bezirk an, den sie zu bereisen haben.

4. In der zwischen Zeit, von den Conferenzen haben sie mit den Aufsichtsältesten Gewalt, die reisenden Prediger zu verwechseln, wo sie es für besser ansehen, auch Prediger aufzunehmen oder zu suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Sie haben die verschiedenen Conferenzen, so weit sie sich erstrecken, zu bereisen, und haben im geistlichen, die Oberaufsicht über alle Gemeinden.

6. Ihnen steht es zu, die Ordination zu vollziehen.

7. Wenn ein Bischof aufhört die verschiedenen Conferenzen zu bedienen in der Gemeinschaft und die Bezirke zu bereisen, kann er doch sein bischöf-

liches Amt unter uns ausüben? Nein, es sey denn, daß er krank wäre und was dergleichen Umstände mehr seyn mögten.

8. Wenn es sich zutragen sollte, daß unsere Gemeinschaft zu einer Zeit keinen Bischof hätte, weil sie entweder gestorben oder suspendirt wären, oder wie es immer seyn mag; wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Der Aelteste, welcher in Abwesenheit eines Bischofs gewählt wird, zum mit agieren an der Conferenz, soll die Bischofs Stelle so lang bedienen, als die Conferenz währt; dieser so gewählte Vorsitzer, soll auch die andere Conferenz bedienen; er soll seinen Sitz, mit dem dort gewählten Vorsitzer nehmen, um mit ihm in der Conferenz zu agieren, und der dort gewählte Vorsitzer, soll eben so, die andere Conferenz auch bedienen, damit eine jede Conferenz weiß, wie es bey der andern aussieht; und daß Liebe und Gemeinschaft erhalten werde, u. s. w. bis zur Haupt-Conferenz, die wieder Bischöffe wählt.

9. Es soll der Bischöffe Pflicht seyn, daß eine schickliche Predigt an die anwesende Prediger bey Schluß jeder Conferenz gehalten wird.

Vierter Abschnitt.

Von den

Aufsichts = Aeltesten,

ihrer

Wahl, Amt und Pflichten.

Fr. Wie sollen die Aufsichtsäeltesten gewählt werden?

Antw. Die Bischöffe sollen der Conferenz einige aus den Aeltesten, die ihre Probezeit ausgehalten, vorschlagen, und mit Zustimmung der Conferenz auf vier Jahre wählen.

Fr. Istens. Was sind die Pflichten des Aufsichtsäeltesten?

Antw. Den ihm von den Bischöffen angewiesenen Bezirk zu bereisen, und so oft zu predigen als er kann

2. Er hat die Uebersicht über die reisenden und sesshaften Prediger, in seinem Bezirk, daß sie sich dem Evangelium gemäß betragen.

3. Er soll die vierteljährliche und große Versammlung bestellen, und wo möglich bedienen; das Abendmahl halten, und vierteljährlich Conferenz halten mit den gegenwärtigen Predigern und Ermahnern und Vorgängern; es untersuchen ob die reisenden und sesshaften Prediger ihre Pflicht thun, besonders ob die sesshaften Prediger wo möglich alle Sonntag predigen, und wo mehrere sind sie zu Zeiten zu verwechseln, wie am meisten Nutzen geschafft wird; sie ermahnen, daß die Zucht und Ordnung und Liebe und Ernst bey den Gemeinden erhalten.

4. Er kann auch die reisenden Prediger in seinem Bezirke verwechseln; er soll aber einen Bischof mit zu Rath ziehen; er kann auch Prediger aufnehmen oder suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Er soll dem Bischof Nachricht geben, wie es in seinem Bezirk aussieht, und nachsehen, daß die reisende Prediger vierteljährig eine verhältnißmäßige Unterstützung erhalten: indem ihnen ihr Gehalt aus dem Geld das sie auf ihrem Bezirk sammeln mögen gegeben wird; ein lediger soll aber doch nicht über achtzig Thaler, und einem geehlichten ein hundert und sechzig Thaler erlaubt seyn; sollte aber es nicht zureichen, was auf einem oder auf dem andern Bezirk gesammelt wird, so soll es einer Comittie aus der Conferenz übergeben werden, die nach gut Befinden aus oder von anderen ihrem gesammelten Geld dem manglenden zu thun, wo aber ein Prediger in einer Stadt stehen sollte, da muß die Gemeinde ihn versorgen.

6. Sollte es sich so zutragen, daß zu einer Zeit kein Bischof da wäre, so sollen die Aufsichtskältesten, ein jeder in seinem Bezirk besonders auf die Gemeinden acht haben, damit alles in Liebe und Ernst erhalten werde, und einer dem andern Nachricht gebe, wie es in seinem Bezirk aussieht. Sollte es sich aber zutragen, daß kein Aufsichtskältester in dem oder jenem Bezirk wäre, wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Es soll dem Bischof Nachricht davon gegeben werden; dieser soll einen von den Ältesten, im Bezirk, dazu bestimmen, bis zur Conferenz wo es zu thun ist; sollte aber kein Bischof da seyn, so soll der nächste Aufsichtskälteste einen wählen, wenn er es nicht selber thun kann.

Fünfter Abschnitt.

Von den Aeltesten ihrer Wahl, Amt, Pflicht und Ordination.

Fr. Wie soll ein Aeltester gewählt werden?

Antw. Nach einer zweyjährigen Prob-Zeit, mag er der jährlichen Conferenz vorgestellt werden und von den Bischöffen mit Auflegung ihrer Hände ordinirt werden; mit diesem Vorbehalt so sich die Conferenz überzeugt fühlt, daß der Inhalt des 6, 7, 8, und 9te Vers Paulus an Titum im ersten Capitel: sich in und an ihm befinden!!! es soll einem jeden bey seiner Ordination vorgelesen werden!!!

1. Was ist eines Aeltesten Amt und Pflicht? Zu predigen so oft und vielmal er kann und zu taufen, Ehen einzusegnen, helfen dem Aufsichtsäeltesten das Abendmahl halten, und wenn der Aufsichtsäelteste nicht gegenwärtig seyn kann, so soll es ein oder zwey Aeltesten thun; er soll alle Theile des öffentlichen Gottesdienstes verrichten, Classen-Versammlungen suchen zu errichten, wo es die Mehrheit der Glieder für gut erkennt, sie auch halten, und helfen Vorgänger zu erwählen.

2. Vierteljährlich eine freywillige Collection zu heben, für die reisenden Prediger und für Arme; ein Verzeichniß davon zu nehmen, an jedem Ort, und von dem Vorgänger unterschrieben, und wenn kein Vorgänger gegenwärtig wäre, es dann von einem andern Glied unterschreiben lassen, um mit dem Aufsichtsäeltesten Rechnung zu halten, auf daß alles ordentlich zugehe.

3. Wo ein seßhafter Aeltester oder Prediger der selber nichts mangelt, an einem Ort predigt, wo kein Reisender hin kommt, so soll er die Collection heben, und ein Verzeichniß ebenso davon nehmen, und es dem Aufsichtsäeltesten, oder zur Conferenz schicken, oder bringen, zur Unterstützung der Bedürftigen seßhaften Prediger die arm sind, und unter armen predigen.

4. Sollte ein reisender Prediger oder Aeltester, seinen ihm angewiesenen Bezirk verlassen wollen, so soll er zuvor dem Aufsichtsäeltesten schreiben —

solte einer ihn etwa verlassen oder versäumen, es sei dann durch Krankheit oder sonst unvermeidliche Umstände, so soll er der nächsten Conferenz verantwortlich dafür seyn.

5. Wo sich seßhafte befinden, welche arm und bedürftig sind, und verlangt wird von ihnen zu predigen; so ist es billig, daß die Ältesten in den Gemeinden Collection machen, um solche Prediger nach verhältniße der Zeit die sie dazu anwenden zu unterstützen, doch nicht über das, was für die reisende Prediger vestgesetzt ist.

Sechster Abschnitt.

Von der

Weise Prediger aufzunehmen,

und

ihrer Amt und Pflichten.

Fr. Wie soll ein Prediger aufgenommen werden, durch die jährliche Conferenz?

1. In der zwischen Zeit von der Conferenz, durch den Bischof, oder den Aufsichtältesten des Bezirks, oder eines Ältesten, der den Platz eines Aufsichtältesten, vertritt auf einer jährlichen oder großen Versammlung, bis zur nächsten Sitzung der Conferenz; keiner wird anders als auf Probe angenommen, einer der auf Probe angenommen ist, mag beybehalten oder abgewiesen werden, ohne daß ihm einiges Unrecht geschehen würde, sonst wäre es keine Probe.

2. Eine jede Person die als Prediger vorgeschlagen wird, soll von der Conferenz untersucht und ihm folgende Frage vorgelegt werden:

Fr. Hat er Gott in Christo als einen vergebenden Gott erkannt?

Hat er Vergebung seiner Sünden erlangt?

Ist die Liebe Gottes durch den heiligen Geist, in dein Herz ausgegossen worden?

Hat er den Frieden Gottes erlangt?

Saget er der Heiligung nach ?

Hat er eine richtige Erkenntniß, von Glauben, von Buße, von Rechtfertigung, Heiligung und Erlösung ?

3. Liegt ihm sein eigen Heil, und das Heil deines Nebenmenschen mehr am Herzen, als sonst alles andere in der Welt ?

Kann er sich dem Rath seiner Brüder unterwerfen ?

Will er gehorsam seyn, zu reden oder schweigen, wie es die Brüder für gut erkennen ?

Ist er willig, so viel als in seinem Vermögen steht, den reisenden Plan (oder den Bezirk zu bereisen) helfen aufrecht zu halten und ihm so viel wie möglich unterstützen ?

4. Was ist die Pflicht eines Predigers ?

Antw. Christum den Gekrenkigten zu predigen, wo sich nur Zuhörer einfinden: Classen Versammlungen aufrichten, wo es nützlich ist, mit ihnen von ihrem Seelen-Zustande zu reden, die angefochtenen suchen zurecht zu weisen, die Trägen suchen aufzumuntern, und alle im Glauben in der Gnade und Erkänntniß Jesu Christi suchen zu erbauen, so viel wie möglich; nie unterlassen die Kranken zu besuchen, und mit seinem Leben und Wandel suchen seine Worte zu bekräftigen was er prediget.

5. Welche Anweisungen werden einem Prediger gegeben ?

Antw. Er sey fleißig, nie verliere er seine Zeit an unnöthigen Dingen, an einigem Ort, immer sey er ernsthaft, sein Denkspruch sey dem Herrn geheiligt, er meide allen Leichtsinn, und Scherzen, er rede bescheiden, und habe behutsamen Umgang mit dem weiblichen Geschlechte, und betrage sich als ein wahrer Christ.

6. Er sey immer abgeneigt Beschuldigungen zu glauben, es sey denn hinlänglich erwiesen er lege alles so viel es mit der Wahrheit bestehen mag zum besten aus.

Er rede von niemand nichts Uebels, was er je von einem denken mag, behalte er solches bey sich selbst, bis er es demjenigen selbst, dem es angeht, sagen kann.

7. Sein Geschäft sey, Seelen zu retten so viel wie möglich; zu diesem Geschäfte gebe er sich auf. Er besuche die es bedürftig sind; in allen Dingen handele er nicht nach seinem eigenen Gutdenken, sondern als ein Sohn des Evangeliums, als ein solcher steht es ihm zu seine Zeit, so wie diese Vorschrift lautet: mit Predigen, mit Hausbesuchen, mit Lehren und Beten, und Betrachtung des Wortes Gottes zuzubringen, damit gehe er um bis der Herr kommt.

Siebenter Abschnitt.

Von dem

Sittenlosen Betragen der Prediger,

wie

mit ihnen soll verfahren werden.

Fr. Was soll gethan werden, wenn von einem Bischof, oder Aufsichtsältesten, oder Prediger, die Nachricht einkommt, als habe er sich eines Verbrechens schuldig gemacht, das im Worte Gottes, als eine ausschließende Handlung geboten sey?

Antw. Wenn ein Bischof wegen Sittenlosen Betragen beschuldigt wird, wie soll mit ihm verfahren werden? Wo sich Beschuldigung ereignen sollte, die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wäre, so soll es einem Aufsichtsältesten und einem Aeltesten bekannt gemacht werden, die sollen es untersuchen, ob etwas an der Sache sey; sie sollen aber keine Klage außer zwey oder drey Zeugen annehmen, als wie der Apostel sagt: scheint es nun, daß er mit recht beschuldigt wird, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Bischof eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen wo sie zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Bischof gegenwärtig seyn sollen, und soll durch die zwey Aufsichtsältesten und drey Aeltesten untersucht werden; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur jährlichen Conferenz; da sollen die Aufsichtsältesten und Aeltesten es noch ein Malh untersuchen, wird er schuldig gefunden so soll er vom Amt suspendirt werden.

Fr. 2. Wenn ein Aufsichtsältester wegen Sittenlosen Betragen beschuldigt würde, was soll gethan werden?

Antw. Wo sich Beschuldigungen ereignen sollten die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wären, so soll es der nächste Aelteste und ein Prediger untersuchen; zeigt es sich nun als ob er schuldig wäre, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Aufsichtsältesten eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen, wo sie sollen zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Aufsichtsälteste gegenwärtig seyn; in Abwesenheit des Bischofs, soll ein anderer Aufsichtsältester und zwey Aeltesten gerufen werden, die sollen es mit untersuchen; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, da soll er verantwortlich seyn.

Fr. 3. Wenn ein Aeltester oder Prediger oder Ermahner sollte beschuldigt werden, wegen Sittenlosen Betragen, was soll gethan werden?

Antw. Der Prediger in der Gegend dem es bekannt wird, soll noch einen Prediger oder Ermahner oder einen Vorgänger mit sich nehmen, und es untersuchen; sollte es scheinen daß er schuldig wäre, so soll ihm Nachricht davon gegeben werden, und eine Zeit bestimmt werden, wo sie, die Kläger und der Beschuldigte gegenwärtig seyn; in Abwesenheit des Bischofs oder Aufsichtsältesten: sollen es drey Aeltesten oder Prediger untersuchen, wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, wo er verantwortlich soll seyn.

Achter Abschnitt.

Von den Gliedern Insgemein.

Ein jedes Glied der Gemeinde sollte bekennen, daß es die Bibel für Gottes Wort halte; daß es sich von nun an von Herzen bestrebe, sein Heil in Christo Jesu zu suchen, und seine Seeligkeit zu schaffen mit Furcht und Zittern, um den zukünftigen ewigen Zorn zu entfliehen.

Ein jedes Glied soll sich bestreben einen genauen gottseligen Wandel zu führen; fleißig seyn im Gebet, besonders im Verborgenem; und wo möglich allen Versammlungen beizuwohnen, beydes öffentlichen Gottesdienst und Betstunden, zu seiner Erbauung.

Häupter in Familien sollten es nie versäumen des Morgens und Abends mit den Ihrigen zu beten, und denselben ein gutes Exempel setzen, in allen Christlichen Tugenden.

Ein jedes soll sich bestreben, genau als in der Gegenwart Gottes zu wandeln; sich bey seinen Geschäften an einen genauen Umgang mit Gott gewöhnen; nie Uebel von seinem Nebenmenschen reden; Liebe üben gegen Freund und Feind, dem Armen gutes zu thun, und suchen in der That ein Nachfolger Jesu Christi zu seyn.

Ein jedes Glied soll den Sabbath halten, so wie es Gottes Wort erfordert: nichts zu kaufen noch zu verkaufen, sondern soll denselben in Andacht mit lesen und hören des Wortes Gottes, mit singen geistreicher Lieder zur Ehre und Lob Gottes zu bringen.

Ein jedes Glied in dieser Gemeinschaft sollte vierteljährlich aus freyem Willen so viel beytragen, wo es seine Umstände erlauben, um die reisende Prediger zu unterhalten.

Es ist einem jeden Gliede seine Pflicht, ein fridliches stilles und gottseliges Leben zu führen, im Umgang mit allen Menschen, wie es einem Christen geziemt, im Frieden zu leben; absonderlich soll jedes der Obrigkeit unterthan seyn, so wie Gottes Wort es fordert.

By solchen Gliedern der Gemeinde, sollen die Pr. eine oder mehrere Classen-Versammlungen errichten, wo es die Mehrheit der Glieder für nützlich halten; daselbst sollen sich die Glieder, wo es seyn kam, einmal in jeder Woche versammeln, an dem dazu bestimmten Ort, um Betstunden mit einander zu halten, um sich zu erbauen in der Gegenwart Gottes und in Liebe zu guten Werken in Christo Jesu.

In jeder Classe sollten Vorgänger in Gegenwart des Predigers gewählt werden, deren Pflicht soll seyn, die Betstunden bestellen, anzufangen, und zu beschließen, auch zu Zeiten Classen-Unterredungen zu halten, ein jedes Glied zu ermahnen und in Liebe erhalten, und auf sich selbst sehen.

Wenn Glieder sich an einander versündigen als Brüder oder Schwestern, so strafe es zuerst zwischen Dir und Ihm allein, höret er dich so hast du ihn gewonnen, höret er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwey zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehe aus zweyer oder dreyer Zeugenmunde; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde, höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner.

Wenn sich Streitigkeiten ereignen sollten, zwischen zwey oder mehrern Gliedern der Gemeinde, von wegen Schulden oder irgend einer andern Ursache, und die streitenden Partheien zu keinem Vertrag kommen können, so soll der Prediger welcher die Aufsicht über die Gemeinde hat, oder der Prediger der in der Gegend wohnt, die Sache untersuchen, und den Streitenden eine Referenz anempfehlen; dieselbe soll aus drey Glieder der Gemeinde bestehen, wovon der Kläger einen, der Beklagte den andern, und diese zwey den dritten erwählen sollen, diese drey sollen dann die Zwiſtigkeiten schlichten. Im Fall aber eine der streitenten Personen mit diesem Ausspruch unzufrieden seyn sollte, so mag sie sich an die nächste vierteljährliche oder große Versammlung wenden es dem Aufsichtältesten oder Ältesten bekannt machen, um eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung anhalten, und wenn die Prediger hinlänglich Ursach dazu finden, so sollen sie eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung ertheilen; in welchem Fall eine jede der Partheyen zwey Glieder aus der Gemeinde, und diese viere, den fünften erwählen sollen; diese sollen den Aus-

spruch der Zwistigkeit gänzlich entscheiden; sollte aber eine der Personen mit diesem Ausspruch doch nicht damit zufrieden seyn, so schließt er sich damit aus; und wenn ein Glied der Gemeinde sich weigern sollte, wegen Schulden oder andern Zwistigkeiten, die Sache schlichten zu lassen, nachdem es ihm von einem Prediger oder Vorgänger, welche die Aufsicht haben, anempfohlen worden, oder ein Glied von der Gemeinde vor Gericht ziehen sollte, ehe die vorhergehende Maafregeln genommen worden, so soll dasselbe von dieser Gemeinde ausgeschlossen seyn, es sey denn, daß Streitigkeiten von der Art wären, daß sie eine gerichtliche Entscheidung erfordern und rechtfertige, als: Executoren oder Administratoren.

A n h a n g .

Von

Hausbesuchen und der Einsdärkung eines thätigen Christenthums !!!

Fr. Wie können wir denen die sich unserer Obforge anvertrauen ferner behülflich seyn?

Antw. Indem wir ihnen Unterricht ertheilen, in ihren Häusern, welches sehr nöthig ist, um das Vertrauen und die Gemeinschaft mit Gott zu befördern: ferner sich in der Weltliebe ab, an einen himmlischen Wandel gewöhnen; sich herzlicher Bruder-Liebe befleißigen, auf daß kein arges Denken und Nichten eines gegen den andern seyn mag, und thun wie wir wünschen gethan zu haben.

2ten. Jeder Prediger muß es sich zu seiner Pflicht machen die Leute in ihren Häusern besuchen, sie ermahnen in allem Guten geschickt zu seyn, bis dieß gethan wird, und zwar mit Ernst und Eifer, so werden wir im ganzen wenig gebessert werden, und unsere Gottseligkeit wird nicht tief genug gegründet; folglich wo wir auch seyn mögen soll kein unnützes Geschwätz aus dem Munde gehen.

Ohne Zweifel sind diese Haus-Besuche und sonderliche Ermahnungen auf die feyerliche Worte des Apostels gegründet. —

„Ich gebe dir den Auftrag, vor Gott und dem Herrn Jesu Christi der bey seiner Wiedererscheinung die Lebendige und die Todten richten wird: Bitte, predige das Wort, halte damit an, es sey zu rechter Zeit, oder zur Unzeit, strafe, drohe, ermahne, mit aller Gedult und Langmuth“ !!! —

Von dem Unterricht der Jugend.

Fr. Was soll zum Besten der heranwachsenden Jugend gethan werden?

Antw. Wer für Gott und das Heil der Seelen einigen Eifer hat, der fange das Werk ohne Verzug an. Wo Kinder sich befinden, deren Eltern in der Gemeinschaft sind, versamle sie so oft es thunlich und nützlich ist: rede mit ihnen, unterweise und ermahne sie in dem Guten, häte mit ihnen ernstlich doch kindlich; daß sie ihren Schöpfer und Erlöser mögen kennen lernen in ihrer Jugend!!!

Art und Weise Prediger zu Ordiniren.

An dem dazu bestimmten Tag soll eine Predigt oder Ermahnung gehalten werden, darinnen das Amt zu predigen, und dessen Pflichten erklärt wird.

Nach diesem spreche der Bischof also zu den anwesenden Brüder: ist jemand unter euch dem einiges Verbrechen oder Hinderniß bewußt ist, warum ein oder die andere Person unter diesen nicht zu dem Amt eines Evangelischen Predigers sollte ordinirt werden, der trette im Namen Gottes hervor, und gebe solches Verbrechen an den Tag. Wird einiges Verbrechen oder Hinderniß entdeckt, so halte der Bischof mit der Ordination der Person innen, bis der Beschuldigte schuldlos erfunden werde.

Alsdann lese ein Aeltester den 6, 7, 8 und 9ten Vers des ersten Capitel Pauli an Titum ihnen mit Nachdruck vor: alsdann nehme der Bischof mit einem der da ordinirt werden soll, folgende Untersuchung vor!!!

Fr. Hast du das Zutrauen daß du innerlich durch den heiligen Geist dazu angetrieben werdest, das Amt eines Predigers auf dich zu nehmen; um darinnen Gott zu dienen, zu seines Namens Ehre, und zur Erbauung seiner Gemeinde?

Antw. Ich traue so.

Fr. Glaubest du ohne Vorbehalt alle Kanonische Bücher des Alten und Neuen Testaments?

Antw. Ich glaube sie.

Fr. Willst du deinen Fleiß dahin wenden, deinen eigenen Wandel nach der Lehre Christi einzurichten, und so viel in dir ist — dich der Heerde Christi zu einem Muster des Christlichen Lebens vorzustellen?

Antw. Ich will, wozu mir Gott verhelfen wolle!

Fr. Willst du denen welchen etwa die Uebersicht über dich anvertraut werden mag mit Ehrerbietung gehorjamen, und ihren guten Ermahnungen mit einem willigen und friedlichen Herzen nachkommen?

Antw. Ich will mich durch Gnade dahin bestreben!

Nun legen die Bischöffe (oder Bischof und ein Aeltester) einem jeden besonders ihre Hände auf das Haupt; und der Bischof spreche also: —

„Nimm anmit hin, die Vollmacht das Amt eines Evangelischen Predigers in der Gemeinde Gottes zu vertreten. Im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes.“

Alsdann gebe der Bischof einem jeden besonders das Bibelbuch übersprechend:

Nimm anmit hin die Vollmacht das Wort Gottes der Gemeinde Christi zu predigen und auszulegen. —

Art und Weise einen Bischof zu ordiniren.

Nach dem Gebet mag das 20ste Cap. von dem 17ten Vers an in der Apostel Geschichte gelesen werden.

Alsdann spreche der Bischof zu dem der ordinirt werden soll.

„Bruder, dieweil die heilige Schrift befiehlt, daß wir niemand zweilig die Hände auflegen, und zur Regierung der Gemeinde Christi annehmen, so beantworte folgende Fragen“:

Fr. Ist es deine Ueberzeugung daß in der göttlichen Schrift alles zu unserer Seligkeit durch Christo enthalten ist, und bist du entschlossen das Volk daraus zu unterrichten?

Antw. Ja.

Fr. Willst du Pflichtmäßig in ordiniren, Hände auflegen und Aussetzung anderer getreu handeln?

Antw. Ja!

Alsdann lege der Bischof und ein oder zwey Aeltesten ihre Hände auf die erwählte Person kniend vor ihnen, der Bischof sage dann:

„Empfange die Gnade Gottes zum Amt und Dienst eines Bischofs in der Gemeinde Gottes das dir nun durch Auslegung unserer Hände übergeben wird, im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des heiligen Geistes Amen.“

Alsdann übergebe der Bischof die Bibel sprechend:

Befleißige dich des Lesens, Lehre und Ermahnen, bedenke die Dinge wohl die in diesem Buch enthalten sind; sey ein Hirte der Heerde Jesu Christi, weide sie, komm den Schwachen zu Hülfe, suche das Verlorne, sey mitleidig auf daß wenn der oberste Hirte der Schaafe erscheinen wird, du die unverwelkliche Krone des ewigen Lebens empfangen mögest Amen.

Aurede an Neuverlobte.

Viel Geliebte!

Wir sind hier vor dem Angesicht Gottes, und in Gegenwart dieser Zeugen versammelt, diese beyde Personen, als Mann und Weib ehelich zusammen zu geben:

J. Taber!

Willst du diese Weibs-Person für dein Eheweib annehmen, um in dem Ehestand dein Leben mit Ihr nach Gottes Ordnung zuzubringen? willst du Ihr Liebe, Trost und Ehre erzeigen, Sie in Krankheit und Gesundheit halten und pflegen und mit Verlassung aller andern, dich zu ihr allein halten, und daß so lange dir Gott das Leben schenken mag? wann daß dein Entschluß ist, so antworte, Ja!

(Dann wende sich der Prediger zum Weib.)

B. Cathar!

Willst du diese Manns-Person für deinen Ehemann annehmen, um in dem Ehestand dein Leben mit ihm nach Gottes Ordnung zuzubringen? willst du ihm Gehorsam, Dienstwilligkeit, Liebe und Ehre erzeigen, in Gesundheit und Krankheit seiner pflegen, und mit Verlassung aller andern, dich zu ihm allein halten, so lang dir Gott das Leben schenken mag: wann das dein Entschluß ist, so antworte, Ja!

„Reicht einander die rechte Hand.“

Jetzt faßt der Prediger ihre beyde Hände zusammen, und spreche: was Gott zusammen gefügt hat, soll der Mensch nicht scheiden; also erkläre ich Euch als Mann und Weib; im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes.

Gott der Vater Sohn und Heiliger Geist, der segne erhalte und bewahre Euch in dem Herrn, er sehe mit Erbarmen auf Euch, und erfülle Euch mit seinen Geistlichen Gaben und Gnade, daß Ihr so bey einander leben möget in dieser Welt, daß Ihr in dem Zukünftigen das ewige Leben haben möget, Amen.

G e h r e

u n d

Z u c h t = O r d n u n g

d e r

Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Hägerstown,

Gedruckt bey Gruber und May.

Von dem
U r s p r u n g
der
Bereinigten Brüder in Christo.

In dem lezt verfloffenen Jahrhundert, hat es dem Herrn unserm Gott gefallen, in verschiedenen Gegenden der Welt Männer zu erwecken, die dem verfallenen Christenthum wieder aufhelfen, und die Lehre vom Kreuz in ihrer Lauterkeit verkündigen sollten.

Er gedachte dabey auch der Deutschen in Amerika, welche hin und wieder in diesen weit ausgebreiteten Lände lebten, und daher nur selten Gelegenheit hatten, das Evangelium vom Kreuz, in ihrer Muttersprache, zu ihrer Erbauung verkündigen zu hören.

Unter andern erweckte er auch einen Otterbein, einen Böhm, und einen Gütthing, rüstete sie aus mit Geist, Gnade und Kraft, in seinem so sehr vernachlässigten Weinberge zu arbeiten und auch unter den Deutschen in Amerika, Sünder zur Buße zu rufen. Diese Männer folgten dem Ruf ihres Herrn und Meisters, arbeiteten im Segen, errichteten hin und wieder herrliche Gemeinden, und führten Christo manche edle Seele zu. Nach und nach erweiterte sich ihr Wirkungskreis, daß sie dabey genöthiget waren sich um Mitarbeiter im Weinberge umzusehen; denn die Erndte war groß und der Arbeiter nur wenige. Gott erweckte andere, die auch willig wurden ihre Kräfte dem Herrn zu widmen; solche wurden dann von einem oder dem andern als Mitarbeiter angenommen.

Die Anzahl der Gemeinds-Glieder in den verschiedenen Gegenden wuchs von Zeit zu Zeit, und das Werk verbreitete sich in den Staaten von Pennsylvanien, Maryland und Virginien. Es wurden jährlich einige große Versammlungen gehalten; bey welchen Gelegenheiten sich Otterbein mit den daselbst gegenwärtigen Predigern unterredete, ihnen die Wichtigkeit des Predigt-Amtes vorstellte, und die Nothwendigkeit allen Ernst anzuwenden, um Seelen zu retten, einschärfte. Bey einer dieser Unterredungen, wurde beschlossen daß alle Prediger eine Zusammenkunft halten sollten, um sich zu berathschlagen, wie sie am nützlichsten seyn könnten.

Die erste Zusammenkunft wurde gehalten in Baltimore, im Jahre 1789. Es waren zugegen :

Wilhelm Otterbein,	Adam Lehmann,
Martin Böhm,	Johannes Ernst,
George Adam Gütting,	Heinrich Weidener.
Christian Neukommer,	

Die zweyte Zusammenkunft wurde gehalten in York County, Paradies Townschip, im Hause des Bruder Spänglers, im Jahr 1791, also folgende Personen gegenwärtig waren, nemlich :

Wilhelm Otterbein,	Johannes Ernst,
Martin Böhm,	J. G. Pfrimmer,
George Adam Gütting,	Johannes Neidig,
Christian Neukommer,	Benedict Sander,
Adam Lehmann,	

und Nach reifer Ueberlegung wie sie mit dem größten Nutzen in dem Weinberge des Herrn arbeiten könnten, wurden wieder solche als Mitarbeiter angenommen, von welchen sie Ursache zu glauben hatten, daß sie wahres Christenthum an ihrem eigenen Herzen erfahren hatten.

Indessen vermehrte sich die Anzahl der Glieder immer mehr und mehr ; die Prediger sahen sich daher verpflichtet alle Jahr eine Zusammenkunft oder Conferenz zu bestimmen, um sich näher zu vereinigen und recht nützlich zu einem gemeinschaftlichen Zweck zu arbeiten ; denn einige waren Reformirte, andere Lutheraner, andere Menonisten, und noch andere Methodisten. Sie bestimmten daher den 25ten September, 1800, in Friederich County, Maryland, im Hause des Bruders Friederich Kemp, zusammen zu kommen. Folgende waren gegenwärtig :

Wilhelm Otterbein,	Christian Krum,
Martin Böhm,	Heinrich Krum,
George Adam Gütting,	Johannes Herrsche,
Christian Neukommer,	Jacob Geisinger,
Adam Lehmann,	Heinrich Böhm,
Abraham Drätsel,	Dietrich Murauf,
George Pfrimmer,	

Sie vereinigten sich daselbst in eine Gesellschaft, die den Namen führt : „Die Vereinigten Brüder in Christo“ ; und erwählten Wilhelm Otterbein und Martin Böhm zu Oberaufsehern oder Bischöfen, und wurden einig einem jeden die Freyheit zu erlauben auf die Art und Weise zu taufen, wie er es nach seiner Ueberzeugung für recht befände.

Von nun an verbreitete sich die Gemeinde immer mehr und mehr es wurden Prediger aufgenommen, die beständig reiseten (denn die vielen Predigtplätze konnten auf keine andere Weise bedient werden); und das Werk verbreitete sich in den Staaten Ohio und Kentucky. Es wurde daher nöthig eine Conferenz im Staat Ohio zu halten, indem es zu beschwerlich geachtet wurde, für die dortigen Prediger jährlich so weit zu der Conferenz zu reisen.

Indessen starben die Brüder Böhm und Gütling, und Bruder Otterbein begehrte, daß ein anderer zum Bischof sollte erwählt werden (weil er selbst, Alters und Schwäche halben, nicht mehr nachsehen konnte), der das Werk übernehme, damit Zucht und Ordnung erhalten würde; denn es war bey einer der Conferenzen beschloffen worden, wenn einer von den Bischöfen sterben sollte, einen andern an seine Stelle zu erwählen. Es wurde also der Bruder Christian Neukommer als Bischof erwählt, welcher die Aufsicht über die Gemeinde über sich nehmen sollte.

Schon lange wurde der Mangel einer Zuchtordnung in der Gemeinde tief empfunden; es war schon mehrmal etwas daran gethan worden; endlich wurde auf der Conferenz im Staat Ohio beschloffen, daß eine Haupt- oder General Conferenz gehalten werden sollte, die es über sich nehmen sollte, die Zuchtordnung in etwas vollständiger zu machen, so wie sie dem Worte Gottes gemäß sey.

Die Glieder zu dieser Conferenz sollten aus den Predigern, in den unterschiedlichen Gegenden, durch die Glieder der Gemeinde gewählt werden, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen; und es waren die folgenden Prediger, die gehörig erwählt waren, gegenwärtig auf der Conferenz, nemlich: Christian Neukommer, Abraham Hiestand, Andreas Zeller, Daniel Treyer, George Benedum, Abraham Trachsel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, Johannes Schneider, Heinrich Kunler, Heinrich Späth, Jsaak Neuschwander, Christian Krum und Jakob Paulus.

Diese versammelten sich am 6ten Juny, 1815, nahe bey Mount-Pleasant, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvanien, wo sie nach reifer Ueberlegung, die folgende Lehre und Regeln für gut und nützlich befanden, sie der Gemeinde in Liebe und Demuth zu übergeben mit dem herzlichsten Wunsch, daß diese Lehre und solche Regeln, nebst dem Worte Gottes möchten beobachtet werden. Denn Gott ist ein Gott der Ordnung, und wo keine Ordnung und Kirchenzucht ist, da verliert sich alle Liebe und Gemeinschaft; daher laßt uns dem Rath des Herrn folgen, der uns lehrt, daß wir durch Demuth einer den andern höher achten als uns selbst, suchen gesinnt zu seyn wie Jesus Christus auch war, der Knechts-Gestalt angenommen, ward gehorsam bis zum Tode am Kreuz, um uns die Gnade und Kraft zu erwerben, daß wir uns aus

Liebe und Demuth einer dem andern unterwerfen könnten; wer sich nicht unterwerfen kann, dem mangelt noch Gnade, Liebe und Demuth; daher sagt Jesus: Wer unter euch der Größte seyn will, der soll des andern Diener seyn; soll einer des andern Diener seyn, so müssen wir einander lieben. Jesus sagt: also wird jedermann erkennen, daß ihr meine rechte Jünger seyd, so ihr Liebe untereinander habt, und wer nicht Liebe hat der bleibt im Tod. So lasset uns Liebe üben, auf daß wir die Herrlichkeit besitzen mögen, die Jesus seinen Jüngern von seinem Vater erbotten hat, daß wir eins seyn möchten, wie er und der Vater eins sind. Darum ihr lieben Brüder, lasset uns suchen gleichgesinnet, einhellig und einträchtig zu seyn, und keins Uebel von dem andern reden oder denken, sondern den Herrn anflehen, daß er uns seinen Geist und Ernst geben möchte, um das Christenthum recht zur Ehre seines heiligen Namens zu führen, und zu unserem eigenen ewigen Wohl. Amen.

Erster Abschnitt.

Daß Glaubens-Bekennniß der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Im Namen Gottes erklären und bekennen wir vor jedermann, daß wir glauben an den einigen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiligen Geist, daß diese Drey Eins sind, der Vater im Sohn, der Sohn im Vater und der Heilige Geist gleiches Wesen mit beyden. Daß dieser dreyeinige Gott Himmel und Erde und alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, trägt, regiert, schützt und erhält.

Wir glauben an Jesum Christum, daß er wahrer Gott und Mensch ist, daß er seine Menschheit durch den Heiligen Geist in Maria angenommen, und von ihr geboren; daß er Heiland und Verfühner des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechts ist, wenn sie die in Jesu angebotene Gnade im Glauben an ihn annehmen; daß dieser Jesus für uns gelitten hat, am Stamme des

Kreuzes gestorben, begraben, am dritten Tage wieder auferstanden, 'gen Himmel gefahren, welcher ist zur rechten Gottes und vertritt uns; und wieder kommen wird am jüngsten Tage, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Todten.

Wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist, daß er gleiches Wesens mit dem Vater und Sohn ist, daß er die Gläubige tröste und sie in alle Wahrheit leite.

Wir glauben an eine Heilige Christliche Gemeinde, die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, die Auferstehung des Fleisches, und ein ewiges Leben.

Wir glauben das die Bibel altes und neues Testaments, Gottes Wort ist; daß sie den wahren Weg zu unserer Seligkeit enthalte, daß ein jeder wahre Christ dieselbe mit den Einflüssen des Geistes Gottes einzig und allein zu seiner Richtschnur nehmen soll, und daß ohne Glauben an Jesum Christum, wahre Buße, Vergebung der Sünden und Nachfolge Christi, niemand ein wahrer Christ seyn kann.

Wir glauben, daß was die Heilige Schrift enthält, nemlich: den Fall in Adam und die Erlösung durch Jesum Christum, der ganzen Welt solle geprediget werden.

Wir halten dafür, daß die äußere Mittel in den Gemeinden Christi, nemlich, die Taufe und das Gedächtniß des Todes des Herrn Jesu, geübt werden sollten; und daß es seinen Kindern obliegt dieselbe besonders zu üben. Die Art und Weise aber soll einem jeden nach seiner Erkenntniß überlassen werden. Auch das Beyspiel von Fußwaschen steht einem jeden frey.

Zweiter Abschnitt.

Von der

Haupt- und Jährlichen-Conferenz.

Frage. Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung sollen die Verhandlungen auf den Conferenzen vorgenommen werden?

Antwort. Es wird verlangt, daß, was auch immer bey dieser Gelegenheit gethan, soll so gethan werden, als ob es in der Gegenwart Gottes wäre; wer zu reden hat, der stehe auf und rede frey, wie er es in seinem Herzen hat.

Frage. Wie und auf was Art sollen die Glieder einer Haupt-Conferenz gewählt werden?

Antw. In einem jeden Distrikt sollen die reisenden Prediger, wenn solche da sind, wenn nicht, so sollen die sechhaften Prediger, die in dem Bezirk wohnen, es den Gemeinden vorstellen, daß sie zwey Aeltesten aus ihrem Bezirk wählen. Es sollen aber alle die Aeltesten, die in dem Bezirk sind und auf die Conferenz gehen können, auf die Wahl gethan und es einige Zeit vorher bekannt gemacht werden; und die zwey, welche die Mehrheit der Stimmen bekommen, sollen die Glieder von der Haupt-Conferenz seyn; die Stimmen sollen aber an jedem Orte schriftlich aufgezeichnet werden, und von einem anwesenden Prediger, oder von einem Vorgänger unterschrieben werden. Der Aufsichtsälteste im Bezirk soll es untersuchen, und sollten zwey von ihnen eine gleiche Anzahl Stimmen haben, so soll er durchs Loos entscheiden, welcher von ihnen erwählt ist.

Fr. Wie oft soll die Haupt-Conferenz gehalten werden?

Antw. Alle vier Jahre.

Fr. Hat die Haupt-Conferenz eine andere Gewalt, die die Jährliche nicht hat?

Antw. Ja, sie hat allein die Gewalt zwey Bischöfe aus den Aeltesten, auf vier Jahre zu wählen; und auch die Zuchtordnung oder Regeln zu verändern oder zu verbessern, nachdem sie es für gut befindet; unter der Bedingung und Ausnahme, daß kein Artikel gemacht werde, der den Reise-Plan aufhebt oder wegthut. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll auch die Distrikte bestimmen, wo die jährlichen Conferenzen gehalten werden sollen.

Fr. Welches sind die Glieder der jährlichen Conferenz?

Antw. Alle die Aeltesten und Prediger, die einen schriftlichen Erlaubnißschein empfangen haben, und in dem Bezirk von einer solchen Conferenz sind, oder in solchen aufgenommen werden.

Fr. Nach welcher Weise und Verordnung sollen die Verhandlungen vorgenommen werden?

Antw. 1. Es wird ein Capitel aus der Bibel verlesen, und kurze Anmerkungen darüber gemacht, alsdann wird gesungen und gebetet, und das so oft als die Conferenz sitzt; und mit Gesang und Gebet beschloffen.

2. Die Conferenz soll einen Schreiber erwählen, und sollte einer der Bischöfe abwesend seyn, auch einen der Aufsichts-Aeltesten, um mit dem Bischof zu agieren.

3. Werden die Prediger untersucht, wie ihr Betragen gegen ihren Nebenmenschen sey; ob ihr Wandel untadelhaft, ob sie so viel Zeit wie möglich anwenden, um das Reich Gottes auszubreiten.

4. Was für Prediger sind auf die Probe anzunehmen?
5. Was für Prediger müssen ferner auf der Probe bleiben?
6. Sind einige zu Aeltesten zu wählen?
7. Sind wohl einige von den Predigern gestorben?
8. Welches sind die Aufsicht-Aeltesten?
9. Wer giebt sich auf zu reisen?
10. Was ist gesammelt worden, theils zufällige Ausgaben zu bestreiten, und theils den reisenden Predigern ihren Gehalt aufzumachen? Ist Rechnung mit ihnen gehalten worden? Haben sie das ihrige bekommen?
11. Wann und wo soll die nächste Conferenz gehalten werden?
12. Sind die Aeltesten ordinirt worden?
13. In was für Bezirke sind die Prediger dieses Jahr angestellt?
14. Ist noch etwas mehr zu thun?
15. Hat die Conferenz die Distrikte bestimmt in ihrem Bezirk, um die Wahl für die Glieder der Haupt-Conferenz zu halten?
16. Ist alles was verhandelt worden, in das Protokoll übertragen worden?

Dritter Abschnitt.

Von der Wählung und Ordination der Bischöfe und von ihrem Amt und Pflicht.

Fr. Wie sollen die Bischöfe eingesetzt werden?

Antw. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll sie wählen, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen der Aeltesten, die zu der Haupt-Conferenz gewählt sind; auch steht es der Conferenz frey, sie, die Bischöfe, noch auf vier Jahre beyzubehalten. Die Gewählten oder Bischöfe müssen aber die unterschiedlichen Bezirke und Conferenzen bereisen können, sonst können sie nicht gewählt werden; die so gewählten Personen sollen von einem Bischof und einem Aeltesten durch Auflegung ihrer Hände ordinirt werden; sollte aber kein Bischof da seyn, so sollen es zwey Aeltesten thun.

Fr. Was sind die Pflichten der Bischöfe ?

Antw. 1. Bey unsern Conferenzen als Vorsitzer zu agiren.

2. Sie haben mit einem Aeltesten, den sie auswählen, den reisenden Predigern ihre verschiedene Bezirke anzuweisen, doch mit der Einschränkung, daß keinem Reise-Prediger gestattet werde, länger als drey aufeinander folgende Jahre an derselben Stelle zu verbleiben, ausgenommen besondere Umstände machen es nothwendig und dann nur mit Bewilligung der Bischöfe.

3. Die Bischöfe zeigen den Aufsichts-Aeltesten ihren Bezirk an, den sie zu bereisen haben.

4. In der Zwischenzeit von den Conferenzen haben sie mit den Aufsichts-Aeltesten Gewalt, die reisenden Prediger zu verwechseln, wo sie es für besser ansehen, auch Prediger aufzunehmen oder zu suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Sie haben die verschiedenen Conferenzen, so weit sie sich erstrecken, zu bereisen, und haben im geistlichen, die Oberaufsicht über alle Gemeinden.

6. Ihnen steht es zu, die Ordination zu vollziehen.

7. Wenn ein Bischof aufhört die verschiedenen Conferenzen in der Gemeinschaft zu bedienen und die Bezirke zu bereisen, kann er doch sein bischöfliches Amt unter uns ausüben? Nein, es sey denn, daß er krank wäre und was dergleichen Umstände mehr seyn möchten.

8. Wenn es sich zutragen sollte, daß unsere Gemeinschaft zu einer Zeit keinen Bischof hätte, weil sie entweder gestorben oder suspendirt wären, oder wie es immer seyn mag; wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Der Aelteste, welcher in Abwesenheit eines Bischofs gewählt wird zum Mitagieren an der Conferenz, soll die Bischofs-Stelle so lang bedienen, als die Conferenz währt; dieser so gewählte Vorsitzer soll auch die andere Conferenz bedienen; er soll seinen Sitz mit dem dort gewählten Vorsitzer nehmen, um mit ihm in der Conferenz zu agiren; und der dort gewählte Vorsitzer soll eben so die andere Conferenz auch bedienen, damit eine jede Conferenz weiß, wie es bey der andern aussieht; und daß Liebe und Gemeinschaft erhalten werde, u. s. w. bis zur Haupt-Conferenz, die wieder Bischöfe wählt.

9. Es soll der Bischöfe Pflicht seyn, daß eine schickliche Predigt beym Schluß jeder Conferenz gehalten wird.

Vierter Abschnitt

Von den

Aufsichts- = Aeltesten,

ihrer

Wahl, Amt und Pflichten.

Fr. Wie sollen die Aufsichts-Aeltesten erwählt werden ?

Antw. Die Bischöfe sollen der Conferenz einige von den Aeltesten, die ihre Probezeit ausgehalten, vorschlagen, und mit Zustimmung der Conferenz auf vier Jahre wählen.

Fr. Was sind die Pflichten des Aufsichts-Aeltesten ?

Antw. 1. Den ihm von den Bischöfen angewiesenen Bezirk zu bereisen, und so oft zu predigen als er kann.

2. Er hat die Uebersicht in seinem Bezirk über die reisenden und sesshaften Prediger, daß sie sich dem Evangelium gemäß betragen.

3. Er soll die vierteljährliche und große Versammlung bestellen, und wo möglich bedienen; das Abendmahl ertheilen, und vierteljährlich Conferenz halten mit den gegenwärtigen Predigern, Ermahnern und Vorgängern; auch untersuchen ob die reisenden und sesshaften Prediger ihre Pflicht thun, besonders ob die sesshaften Prediger wo möglich alle Sonntag predigen, und wo mehrere sind, dieselben zu Zeiten zu verwechseln, wie am meisten Nutzen geschafft wird; sie ermahnen, daß sie Zucht und Ordnung und Liebe und Ernst bey den Gemeinden erhalten.

4. Er kann auch die reisenden Prediger in seinem Bezirke verwechseln; er soll aber einen Bischof mit zu Rath ziehen; er kann auch Prediger aufnehmen oder suspendiren bis auf die Conferenz.

5. Er soll dem Bischof Nachricht geben, wie es in seinem Bezirk aussieht, und nachsehen, daß die reisenden Prediger vierteljährig eine verhältnißmäßige Unterstützung erhalten: indem ihnen ihr Gehalt aus dem Geld das sie in ihrem Bezirk sammeln mögen gegeben wird; einem ledigen soll aber doch nicht über achzig Thaler, und einem verhehlchten nicht über ein hundred

und sechzig Thaler erlaubt seyn; sollte aber es nicht zureichen, was in einem oder dem andern Bezirk gesammelt wird, so soll es einer Committee aus der Conferenz übergeben werden, die nach Gutbefinden aus oder von anderen ihrem gesammelten Geld dem Mangelnden zu thun; wo aber ein Prediger in einer Stadt stehen sollte, da muß die Gemeinde ihn versorgen.

6. Sollte es sich so zutragen, daß zu einer Zeit kein Bischof da wäre, so sollen die Aufsicht's-Aeltesten, ein jeder in seinem Bezirk, besonders auf die Gemeinden Acht haben, damit alles in Liebe und Ernst erhalten werde, und einer dem andern Nachricht gebe, wie es in seinem Bezirk aussieht. Sollte es sich aber zutragen, daß kein Aufsicht'sältester in dem oder jenem Bezirk wäre, wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Es soll dem Bischof Nachricht davon gegeben werden; dieser soll einen von den Aeltesten im Bezirk dazu bestimmen bis zur Conferenz, wo es zu thun ist; sollte aber kein Bischof da seyn, so soll der nächste Aufsicht's-Aelteste einen wählen, wenn er es nicht selber thun kann.

Fünfter Abschnitt.

Von den Aeltesten ihrer Wahl, Amt, Pflicht und Ordination.

Fr. Wie soll ein Aeltester gewählt werden?

Antw. Nach einer zweyjährigen Probezeit, mag er der jährlichen Conferenz vorgestellt werden und von den Bischöfen mit Auflegung ihrer Hände ordinirt werden; mit diesem Vorbehalt so sich die Conferenz überzeugt fühlt, daß der Inhalt im 6t. 7t. 8t. und 9ten Verse Pauli an Titum, im 1sten Capitel, sich in und an ihm befinde! Diese Verse sollen einem jeden, der ordinirt wird, bey seiner Ordination vorgelesen werden!

1. Was ist eines Ältesten Amt und Pflicht? Zu predigen so oft und vielmahl er kann; und zu taufen, Ehen einzusegnen, dem Aufsicht-Ältesten helfen das Abendmahl halten, und wenn der Aufsicht-Älteste nicht gegenwärtig seyn kann, so soll es ein oder zwey Ältesten thun; er soll alle Theile des öffentlichen Gottesdienstes verrichten, Classen-Versammlungen suchen zu errichten, wo es die Mehrheit der Glieder für gut erkennt, sie auch halten, und helfen Vorgänger zu erwählen.

2. Vierteljährlich eine freywillige Collection zu heben für die reisenden Prediger und für Arme; ein Verzeichniß davon zu nehmen an jedem Ort, und von dem Vorgänger unterschrieben, und wenn kein Vorgänger gegenwärtig wäre, es dann von einem andern Glied unterschreiben lassen, um mit dem Aufsicht-Ältesten Rechnung zu halten, auf daß alles ordentlich zugehe.

3. Wo ein seßhafter Ältester oder Prediger, der selber nichts mangelt an einem Ort predigt, wo kein Reisender hin kommt, so soll er die Collection heben, und ein Verzeichniß ebenso davon nehmen, und es dem Aufsicht-Ältesten oder zur Conferenz schicken oder bringen, zur Unterstützung der Bedürftigen seßhaften Prediger die arm sind, und unter Armen predigen.

4. Sollte ein reisender Prediger oder Ältester seinen ihm angewiesenen Bezirk verlassen wollen, so soll er zuvor dem Aufsicht-Ältesten schreiben; sollte einer ihn etwa verlassen oder versäumen, es sei dann durch Krankheit oder sonst unvermeidliche Umstände, so soll er der nächsten Conferenz verantwortlich dafür seyn.

5. Wo sich seßhafte Prediger befinden, welche arm und bedürftig sind, und verlangt wird von ihnen zu predigen, so ist es billig, daß die Ältesten in den Gemeinden Collection machen, um solche Prediger nach Verhältniß der Zeit, die sie dazu anwenden zu unterstützen; doch nicht über das, was für die reisende Prediger vestgesetzt ist.

Sechster Abschnitt.

Von der Weise Prediger aufzunehmen, und ihrem Amt und Pflichten.

Fr. Wie soll ein Prediger aufgenommen werden ?

Antw. 1. Durch die jährliche Conferenz ?

2. In der Zwischenzeit von der Conferenz, durch den Bischof, oder den Aufsichts-Keltesten des Bezirks, oder eines Keltesten, der den Platz eines Aufsichts-Keltesten vertritt auf einer jährlichen oder großen Versammlung, bis zur nächsten Sitzung der Conferenz. Keiner wird anders als auf Probe angenommen; einer der auf Probe angenommen ist, mag beybehalten oder abgewiesen werden, ohne daß ihm einiges Unrecht geschähen würde, sonst wäre es keine Probe.

3. Eine jede Person die als Prediger vorgeschlagen wird, soll von der Conferenz untersucht und ihm folgende Fragen vorgelegt werden :

Hat er Gott in Christo als einen vergebenden Gott erkannt ?

Hat er Vergebung seiner Sünden erlangt ?

Ist die Liebe Gottes durch den heiligen Geist, in sein Herz ausgegossen worden ?

Hat er den Frieden Gottes erlangt ?

Saget er der Heiligung nach ?

Hat er eine richtige Erkenntniß von Glauben, von Buße, von Rechtfertigung, Heiligung und Erlösung ?

Liegt ihm sein eigen Heil, und das Heil seines Nebenmenschen mehr am Herzen, als sonst alles andere in der Welt ?

Kann er sich dem Rath seiner Brüder unterwerfen ?

Will er gehorsam seyn, zu reden oder schweigen, wie es die Brüder für gut erkennen ?

Ist er willig, so viel als in seinem Vermögen steht, den Reise-Plan (oder den Bezirk zu bereisen) helfen aufrecht zu halten und ihn so viel wie möglich zu unterstützen?

Fr. 2. Was ist die Pflicht eines Predigers?

Antw. Christum den Gekreuzigten zu predigen, wo sich nur Zuhörer einfinden; Classen-Versammlungen aufzurichten, wo es nützlich ist, mit ihnen von ihrem Seelen-Zustande zu reden, die angesochtenen suchen zurecht zu weisen, die Trägen suchen aufzumuntern, und alle im Glauben in der Gnade und Erkenntniß Jesu Christi suchen zu erbauen so viel wie möglich; nie unterlassen die Kranken zu besuchen, und mit seinem Leben und Wandel suchen seine Worte zu bekräftigen was er prediget.

Fr. 3. Welche Anweisungen werden einem Prediger gegeben?

Antw. 1. Er sey fleißig; nie verliere er seine Zeit an unnöthigen Dingen, an einigem Ort; immer sey er ernsthaft; sein Denkspruch sey dem Herrn geheiliget; er meide allen Leichtsinn und Scherzen; er rede bescheiden, und habe behutsamen Umgang mit dem weiblichen Geschlechte, und betrage sich in allen Stücken als ein wahrer Christ.

2. Er sey immer abgeneigt Beschuldigungen zu glauben, es sey denn hinlänglich erwiesen; er lege alles so viel es mit der Wahrheit bestehen mag zum Besten aus.

Er rede von niemand nichts Uebels; was er je von einem denken mag, behalte er solches bey sich selbst, bis er es denjenigen selbst, dem es angeht, sagen kann.

3. Sein Geschäft sey, Seelen zu retten so viel wie möglich; zu diesem Geschäfte gebe er sich auf. Er besuche die es bedürftig sind. In allen Dingen handele er nicht nach seinem eigenen Gutdünken, sondern als ein Sohn des Evangeliums; als ein solcher steht es ihm zu seine Zeit, so wie diese Vorschrift lautet: mit Predigen, mit Hausbesuchen, mit Lehren und Beten, und Betrachtung des Wortes Gottes zuzubringen; damit gehe er um, bis der Herr kommt.

Siebenter Abschnitt

Von dem sittenlosen Betragen der Prediger, wie mit ihnen soll verfahren werden.

Fr. 1. Was soll gethan werden, wenn von einem Bischof, Aufsichts-Ältesten, oder Prediger die Nachricht einkommt, als habe er sich eines Verbrechen's schuldig gemacht, das im Worte Gottes, als eine ausschließende Handlung verboten sey?

Antw. Wenn ein Bischof wegen sittenlosen Betragen beschuldigt wird, wie soll mit ihm verfahren werden? Wo sich Beschuldigung ereignen sollte, die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wäre, so soll es einem Aufsichts-Ältesten und einem Ältesten bekannt gemacht werden, die sollen es untersuchen, ob etwas an der Sache sey; sie sollen aber keine Klage auffser zwey oder drey Zeugen annehmen, als wie der Apostel sagt. Scheint es nun, daß er mit recht beschuldigt wird, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Bischof eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen wo sie zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Bischof gegenwärtig seyn sollen, und soll durch die zwey Aufsichts-Ältesten und drey Ältesten untersucht werden. Wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur jährlichen Conferenz; da sollen die Aufsichts-Ältesten und Ältesten es noch einmal untersuchen; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er vom Amt suspendirt werden.

Fr. 2. Wenn ein Aufsichts-Ältester wegen sittenlosem Betragen beschuldigt würde, was soll gethan werden?

Antw. Wo sich Beschuldigungen ereignen sollten, die dem Evangelium nachtheilig wären, so soll es der nächste Älteste und ein Prediger untersuchen; zeigt es sich nun als ob er schuldig wäre, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Aufsichts-Ältesten eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen, wo sie sollen zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Aufsichtsälteste gegenwärtig seyn. In Abwesenheit des Bischofs soll ein anderer Aufsichtsälteste und zwey Ältesten gerufen werden, die sollen es mit untersuchen; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, da soll er verantwortlich seyn.

Fr. 3. Wenn ein Aeltester oder Prediger oder Ermahner sollte beschuldigt werden, wegen sittenlosem Betragen, was soll gethan werden?

Antw. Der Prediger in der Gegend, dem es bekannt wird, soll noch einen Prediger oder Ermahner oder einen Vorgänger mit sich nehmen, und es untersuchen; sollte es scheinen daß er schuldig wäre, so soll ihm Nachricht davon gegeben werden, und eine Zeit bestimmt werden, wo sie, die Kläger und der Beschuldigte gegenwärtig seyn; in Abwesenheit des Bischofs oder Aussichtsältesten, sollen es drey Aeltesten oder Prediger untersuchen, wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, wo er verantwortlich seyn soll.

Achter Abschnitt.

Von den Gliedern insgemein.

Ein jedes Glied der Gemeinde sollte bekennen, daß es die Bibel für Gottes Wort halte; daß es sich von nun an von ganzem Herzen bestrebe, sein Heil in Christo Jesu zu suchen, und seine Seligkeit zu schaffen mit Furcht und Zittern, um den zukünftigen ewigen Zorn zu entfliehen.

Ein jedes Glied soll sich bestreben einen genauen und gottseligen Wandel zu führen; fleißig seyn im Gebet, besonders im Verborgenen; und wo möglich allen Versammlungen beyzuwohnen, beydes öffentlichen Gottesdienst und Betstunden, zu seiner Erbauung.

Häupter in Familien sollten es nie versäumen des Morgens und Abends mit den Ihrigen zu beten, und denselben ein gutes Exempel zu setzen, in allen Christlichen Tugenden.

Ein jedes soll sich bestreben, genau als in der Gegenwart Gottes zu wandeln; sich bey seinen Geschäften an einen genauen Umgang mit Gott gewöhnen; nie Uebel von seinem Nebenmenschen reden; Liebe üben gegen Freund und Feind; dem Armen gutes zu thun, und suchen in der That ein Nachfolger Jesu Christi zu seyn.

Ein jedes Glied soll den Sabbath halten, so wie es Gottes Wort erfordert; nichts zu kaufen noch zu verkaufen, sondern soll denselben in Andacht mit Lesen und Hören des Wortes Gottes, mit Singen geistreicher Lieder zur Ehre und Lob Gottes zubringen.

Ein jedes Glied in dieser Gemeinschaft sollte vierteljährlich aus freyem Willen so viel beytragen, wo es seine Umstände erlauben, um die reisende Prediger zu unterhalten.

Es ist einem jeden Gliede seine Pflicht, ein friedliches, stilles und gottseliges Leben zu führen; im Umgang mit allen Menschen, wie es einem Christen geziemt, im Frieden zu leben; absonderlich soll jedes der Obrigkeit unterthan seyn, so wie Gottes Wort es fordert.

Bev solchen Gliedern der Gemeinde, sollen die Prediger eine oder mehrere Classen-Versammlungen errichten, wo es die Mehrheit der Glieder für nützlich halten; daselbst sollen sich die Glieder, wo es seyn kann, einmal in jeder Woche versammeln, an dem dazu bestimmten Ort, um Betstunden mit einander zu halten, um sich zu erbauen in der Gegenwart Gottes und in Lieb- zu guten Werken in Christo Jesu.

In jeder Classe sollten Vorgänger in Gegenwart des Predigers gewählt werden, deren Pflicht soll seyn, die Betstunden zu bestellen, anzufangen, und zu schließen, auch zu Zeiten Classenunterredungen zu halten, ein jedes Glied zu ermahnen und in Liebe zu erhalten, und auf sich selbst zu sehen.

Wenn Glieder sich an einander versündigen, als Brüder oder Schwestern, so strafe es zuerst zwischen Dir und Ihm allein; höret er dich, so hast du ihn gewonnen; höret er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwey zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehe aus zweyer oder dreyer Zeugen-Munde; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde; höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner.

Wenn sich Streitigkeiten ereignen sollten, zwischen zwey oder mehrern Gliedern der Gemeinde, von wegen Schulden oder irgend einer andern Ursache, und die Streitenden Partheyen zu keinem Vertrag kommen können, so soll der Prediger welcher die Aufsicht über die Gemeinde hat, oder der Prediger, der in der Gegend wohnt, die Sache untersuchen, und den Streitenden eine Referenz anempfehlen; dieselbe soll aus drey Glieder der Gemeinde bestehen, wovon der Kläger einen, der Beklagte den andern, und diese zwey den dritten erwählen sollen, diese drey sollen dann die Zwistigkeiten schlichten.

Im Fall aber eine der streitenden Personen mit diesem Ausspruch unzufrieden seyn sollte, so mag sie sich an die nächste vierteljährliche oder große Versammlung wenden, es dem Aufsicht's-Altesten bekannt machen, um eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung anhalten, und wenn die Prediger hinlänglich Ursach dazu finden, so sollen sie eine zweyte Friedensschlichtung ertheilen; in welchem Fall eine jede der Partheyen zwey Glieder aus der Gemeinde, und diese viere, den fünften erwählen sollen; diese sollen den Ausspruch

der Zwistigkeit gänzlich entscheiden; sollte aber eine der Personen mit diesem Ausspruch doch nicht zufrieden seyn, so schließt er sich damit aus; und wenn ein Glied der Gemeinde sich weigern sollte, wegen Schulden oder andern Zwistigkeiten, die Sache schlichten zu lassen, nachdem es ihm von einem Prediger oder Vorgänger, welche die Aufsicht haben, anempfohlen worden, oder ein Glied von der Gemeinde vor Gericht ziehen sollte, ehe die vorhergehende Maaßregeln genommen worden, so soll dasselbe von dieser Gemeinde ausgeschlossen seyn, es sey denn, daß Streitigkeiten von der Art wären, daß sie eine gerichtliche Entscheidung erfordern und rechtfertige, als: Executoren oder Administratoren.

A n h a n g .

Von der

Nothwendigkeit

der

Vereinigung unsrer selbst.

Lasset uns (aus dem, welches wir schon erkannt haben) das Uebel der Spaltungen in Grundsätzen, der Uneinigkeit im Geist, oder in der Ausübung, wie auch die schrecklichen Folgen davon für uns selbst und andere tief empfinden. Sind wir einig, was kann uns widerstehen? Theilen wir uns, so verderben wir uns selbst, das Werk Gottes, und die Seelen unserer Mitglieder.

Fr. Was kann daher gethan werden, um eine genauere Vereinigung unter uns zu Wege zu bringen?

Antw. 1. Laßt uns von der Nothwendigkeit derselben völlig und tief überzeugt seyn.

2. Betet ernstlich für, und redet treu und offenherzig mit einander.

3. Wenn wir uns versammeln, so laßt uns niemals ohne Gebet auseinander gehen.

4. Haltet sehr darauf, daß keines des andern Gaben verachte.
5. Redet niemals unlauter oder leichtsinnig von einander.
6. Laßt uns suchen eines des andern Character in allen Dingen zu vertheidigen, in so fern es mit der Wahrheit übereinstimmend sey.
7. Arbeitet in Ehren, achtet einer den andern höher als sich selbst.
8. Wir empfehlen eine ernstliche Untersuchung der Ursachen, Uebeln, und Kur des Herzens, und der kirchlichen Trennungen.

Von

Hausbesuchen und der Einschränkung eines thätigen Christenthums.

Fr. Wie können wir denen, die sich unserer Obforge anvertrauen, ferner behüßlich seyn?

Antw. 1. Indem wir ihnen Unterricht ertheilen, in ihren Häusern, welches sehr nöthig ist, um das Vertrauen und die Gemeinschaft mit Gott zu befördern: ferner sich in der Welt-Liebe ab, an einen himmlischen Wandel gewöhnen; sich herzlicher Bruder-Liebe befleißigen, auf das kein arges Denken und Richten eines gegen den andern seyn mag, und thun wie wir wünschen gethan zu haben.

2. Jeder Prediger muß es sich zu seiner Pflicht machen die Leute in ihren Häusern zu besuchen, sie ermahnen in allem Guten geschickt zu seyn. Bis dies gethan wird, und zwar mit Ernst und Eifer, so werden wir in Ganzen wenig gebessert werden, und unsere Gottseligkeit wird nicht tief genug gegründet: folglich wo wir auch seyn mögen, soll kein unnützes Geschwätz aus dem Munde gehen.

Ohne Zweifel sind diese Haus-Besuche und besondere Ermahnungen auf die feyerliche Worte des Apostels gegründet.

„Ich gebe dir den Auftrag vor Gott und dem Herrn Jesu Christi, der bey seiner Wiedererscheinung die Lebendigen und die Todten richten wird: Bitte, predige das Wort, halte damit an, es sey zu rechter Zeit, oder zur Unzeit, strafe, drohe, ermahne, mit aller Geduld und Langmuth.“ —

Von dem Unterrichts der Jugend.

Fr. Was soll zum Besten der heranwachsenden Jugend gethan werden?

Antw. Wer für Gott und das Heil der Seelen einigen Eifer hat, der fange das Werk ohne Verzug an. Wo Kinder sich befinden, deren Eltern in der Gemeinschaft sind, versammle sie so oft es thunlich und nützlich ist: rede mit ihnen; unterweise und ermahne sie in dem Guten; bete mit ihnen ernstlich doch kindlich, daß sie ihren Schöpfer und Erlöser mögen kennen lernen in ihrer Jugend

Art und Weise Prediger zu ordiniren.

1. An dem dazu bestimmten Tag soll eine schickliche Predigt oder Ermahnung gehalten werden.

2. Nachdem ihre Namen laut vorgelesen sind, spreche der Bischof zu den Anwesenden, also:

3. Geliebte Brüder in Christo! ist jemand unter euch dem einiges Verbrechen oder Hinderniß bewußt ist, warum ein oder die andere Person unter diesen nicht zu dem Amt eines Ältesten (oder Diaconus, wie der Fall seyn mag) sollte ordinirt werden, der trete im Namen Gottes hervor, und gebe solches Verbrechen oder Hinderniß an den Tag.

4. Wird eine Hinderniß eingebracht, so halte der Bischof ein mit der Ordination der Person bis er schuldlos ist.

Dann wird gelesen 1. Tim. 3, 8—13.

Desselbigen gleichen sollen die Diener ehrbar seyn; nicht zweyzüngigt, nicht Weinsäufer, nicht unehrlüche Handirung treiben; die das Geheimniß des Glaubens in reinem Gewissen habe... Und dieselbigen lasse man zuvor versuchen; darnach lasse man sie dienen, wenn sie unsträflich sind. Desselbigen gleichen ihre Weiber sollen ehrbar seyn; nicht Lästerrinnen, nüchtern, treu in allen Dingen. Die Diener laß einen jeglichen seyn eines Weibes Mann, die ihren Kindern wohl vorstehen, und ihren eigenen Häusern. Welche aber wohl dienen, die erwerben ihnen selbst eine gute Stufe, und eine große Freudigkeit im Glauben, in Christo Jesu.

Fr. Hast du das Zutrauen, daß du innerlich durch den heiligen Geist dazu angetrieben werdest, das Amt eines Dieners auf dich zu nehmen, um darinnen Gott zu seines Namens Ehre, in der Gemeinde Christi zu dienen?

Antw. Ich traue, mit der Hülfe Gottes.

Fr. Glaubest du der Heiligen Schrift, altes und neues Testament?

Antw. Ja ich glaube.

Fr. Willst du deinen Fleiß dahin anwenden, deinen eigenen Wandel nach der Lehre Christi einzurichten, und so viel in dir ist dich der Heerde Christi zu einem Muster des christlichen Lebens vorzustellen?

Antw. Ich will, so Gott mein Helfer ist.

Fr. Willst du denen, welchen etwa die Uebersicht über dich anvertraut werden mag, mit Ehrerbietung gehorsamen und ihren guten Ermahnungen mit einem willigen und friedlichen Herzen nachkommen?

Antw. Ich will mich durch die Gnade Gottes dahin bestreben!

Dann wird gebetet.

Nach dem Gebet legen die Bischöfe (oder Bischof und Aeltesten) einem jeden die Hände auf das Haupt und spreche:

„Nimm anmit hin, die Vollmacht das Amt eines Aeltesten (oder Dieners) in der Gemeinde Gottes zu vollziehen. Im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes,“ Amen.

Hierauf übergebe der Bischof einem jeden besonders das Bibelbuch, sprechend:

„Nimm anmit hin, die Vollmacht das Wort Gottes zu lesen und zu predigen in der Gemeinde Christi.“

Alsdann lese der Bischof aus dem 12ten Capitel Lucä, V. 35—38:

Lasset eure Lenden umgürtet seyn, und eure Lichter brennen; und seyd gleich den Menschen, die auf ihren Herrn warten, wenn er ausbrechen wird von der Hochzeit, auf daß wenn er kommt, und anklopft, sie ihm bald aufthun. Selig sind die Knechte, die der Herr, wenn er kommt, wachend findet. Wahrlich ich sage euch: Er wird sich aufschürzen, und wird sie zu Tische setzen, und vor ihnen gehen, und ihnen dienen. Und so er kommt in der andern Wache, und in der dritten Wache, und wird es also finden, selig sind diese Knechte.

Dann bete der Bischof, oder einer den er heißt; worauf dann der folgende Segen vom Bischof gesprochen wird.

Der Friede Gottes erhalte eure Herzen und Sinnen in der Erkenntniß Jesu Christo unserm Herrn. Amen.

Art und Weise einen Bischof zu ordiniren.

Nach dem Gebet lese der Bischof wie folget :

Höret des Herrn Wort !

Matth. 28. V. 18—20. Und Jesus trat zu ihnen, redete mit ihnen und sprach : Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt im Himmel und auf Erden. Darum gehet hin, und lehret alle Völker, und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, und des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes ; und lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe : Und siehe Ich bin bey euch alle Tage, bis an der Welt Ende.

Apostelgeschichte 20. V. 27—32. Denn ich habe euch nichts verhalten, daß ich nicht verkündigt hätte alle den Rath Gottes. So habt nun acht auf euch selbst, und auf die ganze Heerde, unter welchen euch der Heilige Geist gesetzt hat zu Bischöfen, zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes, welche er durch sein eigenes Blut erworben hat.

Denn das weiß ich, daß nach meinem Abschied werden unter euch kommen gräuliche Wölfe, die der Heerde nicht verschonen werden. Auch aus euch selbst werden aufstehen Männer, die da verkehrte Lehren reden, die Jünger an sich zu ziehen. Darum seyd wacker, und denkt daran, daß ich nicht abgelassen habe drey Jahre, Tag und Nacht einen jeglichen mit Thränen zu vermahnen. Und nun, liebe Brüder, ich befehle euch Gott, und dem Wort seiner Gnade, der da mächtig ist euch zu erbauen, und zu geben das Erbe, unter allen, die geheiligt werden.

1 Timotheum 3. V. 1—7. Das ist je gewißlich wahr, so jemand ein Bischofs-Ampt begehret, der begehret ein köstliches Werk. — Er soll aber ein Bischof unsträflich seyn, eines Weibes Mann, nüchtern, mäßig, sittig, gastfrey, lehrhaftig ; nicht ein Weinsäufer, nicht pochen, nicht unehrliche Handlung treiben ; sondern gelinde, nicht haderhaftig, nicht geizig ; der seinem eigenen Hause wohl vorstehe, der gehorsame Kinder habe mit aller Ehrbarkeit ; (so aber jemand seinem eigenen Hause nicht weiß vorzustehen, wie wird er die Gemeinde Gottes versorgen ? nicht ein Neuling, auf daß er sich nicht aufblase, und dem Lästerer ins Urtheil falle. Er muß aber auch ein gutes Zeugniß haben von denen, die draussen sind, auf daß er nicht falle dem Lästerer in die Schmach und Strick.

Wann die Ablebung des Evangeliums und der Epistel geschehen, und die darauf folgende Rede geendet ist, so ersuche der Bischof die erwählte

Person hervor zu treten, erinnere die anwesende Versammlung zum Gebet, und spreche alsdann zu dem der ordinirt werden soll, wie folget :

B r u d e r! Weil die göttliche heilige Schrift befiehet, daß wir Niemanden zu eilig die Hände auflegen, und zur Regierung der Gemeinde Christi, welche er um keinen geringern Preis als mit Darreichung und Vergießung seines eigenen Blutes erkaufte hat, annehmen: so will ich dich, dieserwegen, ehe und bevor ich dich zu dieser Verwaltung annehme, über einige gewisse Punkte, dieser Sache betreffend, fragen.

Der Bischof. Ist das deine Ueberzeugung, daß in dem alten und neuen Testament, alle zu unserer, durch Jesum Christum erworbenen, ewigen Seligkeit nöthigen Lehre enthalten sey; und bist du entschlossen das Volk, so deiner Obhut anvertrauet werden mag, aus eben dieser Heiligen Schrift, nach dem Vermögen das dir Gott gibt, zu unterrichten, und nichts zu lehren, als was darinnen erwiesen werden kann?

A n t w. Ja, ich bin überzeugt, und will mit der Hülfe Gottes darnach thun.

Der Bischof. Bist du willens dich in eben dieser Heiligen Schrift so zu üben mit herzlichem Gebet zu Gott, um den rechten Verstand derselben zu erkennen, damit du heilsam lehren kannst?

A n t w. Mit der Hülfe Gottes will ich so thun.

Der Bischof. Willst du, so viel an dir liegen mag, friedlich und liebevoll gegen Jedermann seyn; und solches auch zwischen andere zu befördern suchen, nach der Gewalt, die dir nach Gottes Wort zustehet?

A n t w. Ich will so thun, der Herr sey meine Hülfe.

Der Bischof. Willst du in Ordinarung, Ausfendung und Hände-Auflegung, zu solchen Zwecken, gewissenhaft und pflichtmäßig handeln?

A n t w. Ich will durch die Hülfe Gottes.

Alsdann spreche der Bischof:

Der allmächtige Gott und himmlische Vater gebe dir die Kraft, und das Vermögen zum Vollbringen, daß du als ein getreuer Diener mögest erfunden werden am Tage des Gerichts, durch unsern Herrn Jesum Christum, Amen.

Der Bischof. Laßt uns beten.

Nach dem Gebet kniet der der ordinirt werden soll nieder, und der Bischof sammt den anwesenden Aeltesten legen ihre Hände auf sein Haupt. Der Bischof spreche:

Empfange den heiligen Geist zum Amt und Dienst eines Bischofs in der Gemeinde Gottes, daß dir nun durch Auflegung unserer Hände über-

geben wird. Im Namen Gottes des Vaters, und des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes, Amen.

Alsdann übergebe ihm der Bischof die Bibel und spreche :

Befleißige dich des Lesens, Lehrens und Ermahnens. Bedenke die Lehren wohl, die in diesem heiligen Buche enthalten sind ; sey fleißig dieselben zu üben. Trage Sorge über dich selbst und über deine Lehre. Weide die Herde Jesu Christi. Komme den Schwachen zu Hülfe. Sey mitleidig. Halte Zucht mit Barmherzigkeit, auf daß du die Krone des ewigen Lebens empfangen mögest, durch Jesum Christum unserm Herrn, Amen.

Dann bete der Bischof zum Beschluß, oder heiße sonst jemand beten.

Form, die Ehen einzusegnen.

A n r e d e .

Viel Geliebte!

Wir sind hier vor dem Angesichte Gottes und diesen gegenwärtigen Zeugen versammelt, die beyde Personen, nemlich M. und N. als Mann und Weib ehelich zusammen zu geben. Die Ehe ist ein ehrbarer Stand, von Gott selbst im Stand der Unschuld der ersten Menschen eingesetzt.

F r a g e. Ist nun jemand gegenwärtig dem etwan einiges Hinderniß bekannt ist, warum diese beyde Personen nicht verehelicht werden sollten, der zeige es nun in gebührender Ordnung an, oder schweige auf ewig darnach.

Wird nun keine Hinderniß angezeigt, so frage der Prediger die Manns- person :

M. N. Willst du diese Weibsperson (N. N.) für dein Eheweib annehmen, um in dem Ehestand mit ihr nach Gottes Ordnung zu leben? Willst du ihr Liebe und Trost erzeigen; in Gesundheit und Krankheit, in Reichthum und in Armuth ihr pflegen; und dich zu ihr alleine halten, wie es einem christlichen Ehemann zusteht; sie nicht zu verlassen bis euch der Tod scheiden wird? so antworte J a.

Dann frage der Prediger das Weibsbild.

N. N. Willt du diese Mannsperson (N. N) für deinen Ehemann annehmen, um in dem Ehestand mit ihm nach Gottes Ordnung zu leben? Willt du ihm gehorsam und dienstwillig seyn, ihm Liebe und Ehrfurcht erzeigen, und ihn pflügen in Krankheit, in Gesundheit, in Reichthum und Armuth; mit Verlassung aller andern, dich alleine zu ihm halten, wie es einem christlichen Eheweib zusteht; ihn nicht zu verlassen, bis euch der Tod scheiden wird? so antworte Ja.

Nun lasse der Prediger die Verlobten einander die rechte Hand geben, und der Prediger spreche:

Was Gott zusammen gefüget hat, soll der Mensch nicht scheiden.

Weil nun N. und N. sich in den Ehestand begeben, und solches allhier vor Gottes Angesicht und den gegenwärtigen Zeugen deutlich bekennet und bezeugt haben, so erkläre ich sie hiemit als Mann und Weib, im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes. Der Gott Abrahams, und Isaac, und Jacob segne diesen Mann und dieses Weib, und säe den Samen des ewigen Lebens in ihre Herzen, Amen.

Laßt uns beten.

Das Ende.

Ursprung, Lehre, Constitution

und

Zucht = Ordnung

der

Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

B a l t i m o r e.

Gedruckt bei William Kaine.

1841.

73

U r s p r u n g

der

Bereinigten Brüder in Christo.

In dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert gesiel es dem Herrn unserm Gott in den verschiedenen Gegenden der Welt Männer zu erwecken, die dem verfallenen Christenthum wieder aufhelfen, und die Lehre vom Kreuz in ihrer Lauterkeit verkündigen sollten.

Ungefähr um die Mitte des besagten Jahrhunderts gedachte der Herr auch der Deutschen in Amerika, welche hin und wieder in diesem weit ausgebreiteten Lande lebten, und daher nur selten Gelegenheit hatten, das Evangelium vom Kreuz, in ihrer Muttersprache zu ihrer Erbauung verkündigen zu hören.

Unter andern erweckte er Wilhelm Otterbein und Martin Böhm in Pennsylvanien, und Georg A. Gütting in Maryland, rüstete sie aus mit Geist, Gnade und Kraft, in seinem so sehr vernachlässigten Weinberge zu arbeiten, um auch unter den Deutschen in Amerika Sünder zur Buße zu rufen. Diese Männer folgten dem Rufe ihres Herrn und Meisters, arbeiteten im Segen, errichteten hin und wieder herrliche Gemeinden, und führten Christo manche edle Seelen zu.

Nach und nach erweiterte sich ihr Wirkungskreis, daß sie daher genöthiget waren sich nach Mitarbeiter im Weinberge umzusehen; denn die Erndte war groß und der Arbeiter nur wenige. Gott erweckte andere, die auch willig wurden, ihre Kräfte dem Herrn zu widmen; solche wurden dann von einem oder dem andern als Mitarbeiter angenommen.

Die Anzahl der Gemeindeglieder in den verschiedenen Gegenden wuchs von Zeit zu Zeit, und das Werk verbreitete sich schnell in den Staaten Pennsylvanien, Maryland und Virginien. Es wurden jährlich einige große Versammlungen gehalten, bei welchen Gelegenheiten sich Otterbein mit den daselbst gegenwärtigen Predigern unterredete, ihnen die Wichtigkeit des Predigt-Amtes vor-

stellte, und die Nothwendigkeit allen Ernst anzuwenden, um Seelen zu retten, einschärftete. Bei einer dieser Unterredungen wurde beschloffen, daß alle Prediger eine Zusammenkunft halten sollten, um sich zu berathschlagen, wie sie am Nützlichsten sein könnten.

Die erste Zusammenkunft war im Jahre 1789 in Baltimore, Maryland. Es waren folgende Prediger zugegen: Wilhelm Otterbein, Adam Lehmann, Martin Böhm, Johannes Ernst, Georg Ad. Gütting, Heinr. Weidner, Christian Neukommer.

Die zweite Zusammenkunft wurde in York County, Paradies Township, Pennsylvanien, im Hause des Bruders Spänglers, im Jahre 1791 gehalten, wo folgende Prediger gegenwärtig waren:

Wilhelm Otterbein, Johannes Ernst, Martin Böhm, J. G. Pfirmer, Georg Ad. Gütting, Johann Reidig, Chr. Neukommer, Benedikt Sander, Adam Lehmann.

Nach reifer Ueberlegung, wie sie mit dem größten Nutzen in dem Weinberge des Herrn arbeiten könnten, wurden wieder solche als Mitarbeiter angenommen, von welchen sie Ursache zu glauben hatten, daß sie wahres Christenthum an ihrem eigenen Herzen erfahren hatten.

Indessen vermehrte sich die Anzahl der Glieder immer mehr und mehr. Die Prediger sahen sich daher verpflichtet alle Jahr eine Zusammenkunft oder Conferenz zu bestimmen, um sich näher zu vereinigen und recht nützlich zu einem gemeinschaftlichen Zweck zu arbeiten; denn einige waren Reformirte, andere Lutheraner und noch andere Menonisten. Sie bestimmten daher den 25. September 1800, in Friedrich County, Maryland, im Hause des Bruders Friedrich Kemp, zusammen zu kommen. Folgende Prediger waren zugegen:

Wilhelm Otterbein, Christian Krum, Martin Böhm, Heinrich Krum, Georg A. Gütting, Johann Herrsche, Chr. Neukommer, Jacob Geisinger, Adam Lehmann, Heinrich Böhm, Abraham Draxel, Dietrich Murauf, Johann Georg Pfirmer.

Sie vereinigten sich daselbst in eine Gesellschaft, die den Namen führt: „Die Vereinigten Brüder in Christo“; und erwählten Wilhelm Otterbein und Martin Böhm zu Ober-Ausssehern oder Bischöfen, und wurden einig einen jeden die Freiheit zu erlauben auf die Art und Weise zu taufen, wie er es nach seiner Ueberzeugung für recht befände.

Von nun an verbreitete sich die Gemeinde immer mehr und mehr; es wurden Prediger aufgenommen, die beständig reiseten (denn die vielen Predigtplätze konnten auf keine andere Weise bedient werden), und das Werk verbreitete sich in die Staaten Ohio und Kentucky. Es wurde daher nöthig, eine Confe-

renz im Staate Ohio zu halten, indem es zu beschwerlich geachtet wurde, für die dortigen Prediger jährlich so weit zu der Conferenz zu reisen.

Indessen starben die Brüder Böhm und Gütling, und Bruder Otterbein begehrte, daß ein anderer zum Bischof sollte erwählt werden (weil er selbst, Alters und Schwäche halber, nicht mehr nachsehen konnte,) der das Werk übernehme, damit Zucht und Ordnung erhalten würde; denn es war bei einer der Conferenzen beschloffen worden, wenn einer von den Bischöfen stirbt, soll ein anderer an seine Stelle erwählt werden. Es wurde also der Bruder Christian Neukommer als Bischof erwählt, welcher die Aufsicht über die Gemeinde über sich nehmen sollte.

Schon lange wurde der Mangel einer Zucht-Ordnung in der Gemeinde tief empfunden; es war schon mehrmals etwas daran gethan worden; endlich wurde auf der Conferenz im Staate Ohio beschloffen, daß eine Haupt- oder General-Conferenz gehalten werden sollte, die es über sich nehmen sollte, die Zucht-Ordnung in etwas vollständiger zu machen, sowie dem Worte Gottes gemäß sein.

Die Glieder dieser Conferenz sollten aus den Predigern, in den unterschiedlichen Gegenden, durch die Glieder der Gemeinde gewählt werden; und es wurden die folgenden Brüder erwählt, nämlich:

Chr. Neukommer, Abrah. Hiestand, Andreas Zeller, Daniel Treper, Georg Benedum, Abraham Traxel, Christian Berger, Abraham Meyer, Johann Schneider, Heinrich Kumlcr, Heinrich Späth, J. Neuschwander, Chr. Krum, Jakob Baulus.

Diese versammelten sich am 6. Juni 1815, nahe bei Mount-Pleasant, in Westmoreland County, Pennsilvanien, wo sie nach reifer Ueberlegung die folgende Lehre und Regeln für gut und nützlich befanden, sie der Gemeinde in Liebe und Demuth zu übergeben, mit dem herzlichen Wunsche, daß diese Lehre und solche Regeln, nebst dem Worte Gottes möchten beobachtet werden. Denn Gott ist ein Gott der Ordnung, und wo keine Ordnung und Kirchenzucht ist, da verliert sich alle Liebe und Gemeinschaft; daher laßt uns dem Rathe des Herrn folgen, der uns lehrt, daß wir durch Demuth einer den andern höher achten, als uns selbst, suchen gesinnet zu sein, wie Jesus Christus auch war, der Knechtsgestalt angenommen, ward gehorsam bis zum Tode am Kreuz, um uns die Gnade und Kraft zu erwerben, daß wir uns aus Liebe und Demuth einer dem andern unterwerfen könnten, wer sich nicht unterwerfen kann, dem mangelt noch Gnade, Liebe und Demuth; daher sagt Jesus: Wer unter euch der Größere sein will, der soll des andern Diener sein. Soll einer des andern Diener sein, so müssen wir einander lieben.

Jesus sagt: daran wird Jedermann erkennen, daß ihr meine rechte Jünger seid, so ihr Liebe unter einander habt, und wer nicht Liebe hat, der bleibt im Tod. So laßet uns Liebe üben, auf daß wir die Herrlichkeit besitzen mögen, die Jesus seinen Jüngern von seinem Vater erbeten hat, daß wir eins sein möchten, wie er und der Vater eins sind. Darum, ihr lieben Brüder, laßet uns suchen gleichgesinnet, einhellig und einträchtig zu sein, und keiner Uebel von dem andern reden oder denken, sondern den Herrn anflehen, daß er uns seinen Geist und Ernst geben möchte, um das Christenthum recht zur Ehre seines heiligen Namens zu führen, und zu unserem eigenen ewigen Wohl. Amen.

Erster Abschnitt.

Das Glaubensbekenntniß.

Im Namen Gottes erklären und bekennen wir vor Jedermann, daß wir glauben an den einigen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und heiliger Geist, daß diese Drei Eins sind, der Vater im Sohn, der Sohn im Vater und der Heilige Geist gleiches Wesen mit beiden. Daß dieser dreieinige Gott Himmel und Erde und alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, trägt, regiert, schützt und erhält.

Wir glauben an Jesum Christum, daß er wahrer Gott und Mensch ist, daß er seine Menschheit durch den heiligen Geist in Maria angenommen, und von ihr geboren, daß er Heiland und Versöhner des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechts ist, wenn sie die in Jesu angebotene Gnade im Glauben an ihn annehmen; daß dieser Jesus für uns gelitten hat, am Stamme des Kreuzes gestorben, begraben, am dritten Tage wieder auferstanden, gen Himmel gefahren, welcher ist zur Rechten Gottes und vertritt uns; und wieder kommen wird am jüngsten Tage, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Todten.

Wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist, daß er gleiches Wesen mit dem Vater und Sohn ist, daß er die Gläubige tröste und sie in alle Wahrheit leite.

Wir glauben an eine Heilige Christliche Gemeinde, die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, die Auferstehung des Leibes, und ein ewiges Leben.

Wir glauben, daß die Bibel, altes und neues Testament, Gottes Wort ist; daß sie den wahren Weg zu unserer Seligkeit enthalte, daß ein jeder wahrer Christ dieselbe mit den Einflüssen des Geistes Gottes einzig und allein zu seiner Richtschnur nehmen soll, und daß ohne Glauben an Jesum Christum, wahre Buße, Vergebung der Sünden und Nachfolge Christi, Niemand ein wahrer Christ sein kann.

Wir glauben, daß was die heilige Schrift enthält, nämlich: den Fall in Adam und die Erlösung durch Jesum Christum, der ganzen Welt sollte gepredigt werden.

Wir sind überzeugt, daß die äußeren Verordnungen, nemlich die Taufe und das Gedächtniß des Todes unseres Herrn Jesu Christi, in allen Christlichen Gemeinden geübt werden sollten, und daß es Kindern Gottes besonders geziemt, dieselben zu gebrauchen. Die Art und Weise aber, wie dieselbe geübt werden sollten, soll dem Urtheil und dem Erkenntniß eines Jeglichen überlassen sein. Auch das Beispiel des Fußwaschens steht einem Jedem frei zu üben oder zu unterlassen. Jedoch ist es keinem unserer Prediger oder Gemeindegliedern geziemend, seinen Mitbruder, dessen Urtheil und Erkenntniß von dem seinigen verschieden ist, deswegen öffentlich oder in Privat zu verkleinern, oder seine Art und Weise, wie er dieselbe übt, zu verachten; wer sich hierin schuldig macht, soll als ein Verläumder seiner Brüder geachtet, und deshalb verantwortlich sein.

Zweiter Abschnitt.

Constitution der Kirche.

Wir, die Glieder der Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo, setzen in dem Namen Gottes, zur Bervollkommnung der Gottesfürchtigen, das Werk des Predigt-Amtes, die Beförderung der Kirche Christi, sowohl als eine regelmäßige Bestimmung bei allen Handlungen im Glauben und in der Ausführung zu sichern, sowie auch die Macht und die Geschäfte der vierteljährlichen, jährlichen und General-Conferenzen zu bestimmen, wie es diese Kirche angenommen hat, folgende Artikel fest:

Artikel I.

Abchnitt 1. — Alle hierin bewilligte geistliche Gewalt, irgend eine Zuchtregel zu machen oder aufzuheben, soll einer Haupt-Conferenz übertragen sein, welche aus Aelteste bestehen soll, die von den Gliedern in jedem Conferenzz-Distrikte, durchaus der Gesellschaft gewählt werden sollen. Festgesetzt wird jedoch, daß die Aeltesten in den Conferenzz-Distrikten, von welchen sie gewählt, drei Jahre gestanden haben.

Abchnitt 2. — Alle vier Jahre soll eine General-Conferenz gehalten werden, in welcher die Bischöfe als Mitglieder und präsidirende Beamte betrachtet werden sollen.

Abchnitt 3. — Jede jährliche Conferenz soll der Gesellschaft die Namen derjenigen Aeltesten vorlegen, welche zur Wahl, als Glieder der General-Conferenz, fähig sind.

Artikel II.

Abchnitt 1. — Die General-Conferenz soll die Gränzen der jährlichen Conferenzen bestimmen.

Abchnitt 2. — Die General-Conferenz soll in jeder ihrer Sitzungen aus den Aeltesten, welche sechs Jahre in derselben gestanden haben, Bischöfe erwählen.

Abchnitt 3. — Die Geschäfte jeder jährlichen Conferenz sollen streng der Zuchtordnung gemäß gethan werden. Irgend eine jährliche Conferenz, die gegen die Verfügung der Haupt-Conferenz handelt, soll durch Auflage von derselben gerichtet werden.

Abchnitt 4. — Keine Regel oder Gesetz soll zu irgend einer Zeit passiren, wodurch das Glaubensbekenntniß, wie es jetzt besteht, verändert oder verworfen, und der Reiseplan zerstört wird.

Abchnitt 5. — Keine Regel soll angenommen werden, die den Rechten irgend eines Menschen Eintrag thut, in Bezug auf die Art und Weise der Taufe, das Sacrament des Abendmahls des Herrn, oder des Fißewaschens, 2c.

Abchnitt 6. — Es soll keine Regel gemacht werden, wodurch den seßhaften Predigern ihre Stimmen in den jährlichen Conferenzen, zu denen sie verschiedentlich gehören, beraubt werden.

Abchnitt 7. — Keine Verbindung mit geheimen Gesellschaften, noch unfreiwillige Dienstbarkeit soll unter irgend einer Bedingung erlaubt werden.

Artikel III.

Die Rechte, die Namen, die Interessen und die Anrechte alles Eigenthums in liegenden Gründen, Kirchen, Vermächtnissen oder Schenkungen irgend einer Art, welche durch Ankauf oder auf andere Weise von einer oder mehrere Perso-

nen, für den Gebrauch, Vortheil und Nutzen der Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo, bestimmt sind, soll hiermit vollkommen berücksichtigt und als Eigenthum besagter Kirche betrachtet werden.

Artikel IV.

Keine Veränderungen der vorhergehenden Constitution soll gemacht werden, es sei denn, durch eine Stimmenzahl von zwei Dritttheilen der ganzen Gesellschaft.

Dritter Abschnitt.

General = Conferenz.

1. Frage. Welche sind die Glieder der General Conferenz?

 Siehe Constitution.

2. Fr. Wie und auf welche Art sind dieselben zu wählen?

1. Antwort. In der Wahl von Abgeordneten zur Haupt-Conferenz soll es die Pflicht jeder jährlichen Conferenz sein, eine Committee von dreien in ihren unterschiedlichen Conferenz-Distrikten zu ernennen, um die Stimmen zu empfangen und zu zählen, und es unmittelbar denjenigen anzuzeigen, welche gewählt worden sein mögen, sowie auch den vorstehenden Aeltesten eine Liste aller wählbaren Aeltesten zukommen zu lassen.

2. Antw. Die Aufsichts-Aeltesten sollen sie jedem beauftragten Reise-Prediger liefern, deren Pflicht es sein soll, jeden Claßleiter oder Aufseher durch den ganzen Umkreis sechs Monate vor der General-Conferenz mit einer Abschrift davon zu versehen.

3. Antw. Es soll die Pflicht eines jeden Claßleiters oder Aufsehers sein, eine Versammlung der Mitglieder jeder Classe anzuordnen, um durch Ballotiren oder auf andere Weise einen oder mehrere Abgeordnete zu wählen, dieselben in der Haupt-Conferenz zu repräsentiren.

4. Antw. Es soll gleicherweise die Pflicht eines jeden Claßleiters oder Aufsehers sein, jeden Wahlbericht zu unterschreiben, einzuschließen und zugesiegelt dem beauftragten Prediger einzuhandigen; dieser hinwiederum dem Aufsichts-Aeltesten, dessen Pflicht es sei, solchen der von der jährlichen Conferenz ernannten Committee zu übersenden.

5. Antw. Die zum Empfange und zur Zählung der Stimmen ernannte Committee soll ein Verzeichniß der Personen, für welche gestimmt worden, und die Anzahl von Stimmen, die jede erhalten, ausfertigen. Sollten zwei oder mehr der Candidaten eine gleiche Anzahl Stimmen haben, so sollen die so ernannten Personen durch's Loos entscheiden, wer oder welche von ihnen gewählt sind. Sie sollen ebenso die Namen derer, die gewählt sind, an die Conferenz-Buchdruckerei zur Bekanntmachung einsenden.

3. Frage. Wie viel Abgeordnete sollen zur General-Conferenz geschickt werden?

Antw. Drei von jedem jährlichen Conferenz-Distrikte.

4. Frage. Wie sollen die Kosten der Abgeordneten zur General-Conferenz gedeckt werden?

Antw. Wenn der Clafleiter oder Aufseher die Stimmen für die Abgeordneten zur General-Conferenz sammelt, soll eine Collette zu dem Zwecke von ihm veranstaltet werden, die er der Committee, welche mit dem Zählen der Stimmen beschäftigt, übergeben soll, die es an die gewählten Abgeordneten zu zahlen hat.

Vierter Abschnitt.

J ä h r l i c h e C o n f e r e n z .

1. Frage. Wer sind die Glieder der jährlichen Conferenz?

Antwort. Alle Aelteste und lizensirte Prediger, welche zu der Zeit in dem Distrikte sind, wo die Conferenz gehalten werden soll; wenn aber solche lizensirte Prediger zur Ordination vorgeschlagen sind, so sollen die Aeltesten allein dasselbe durch Abstimmen entscheiden.

2. Frage. Auf welche Weise sind die Verhandlungen einer Conferenz zu führen?

1. Antwort. Es soll bei der Eröffnung der Conferenz jeden Tag eine Abtheilung aus der Bibel gelesen und gesungen und gebetet, und beim Schlusse gebetet und gesungen werden.

2. Antw. Die Conferenz soll zwei Sekretaire wählen wenn es nöthig ist, einen Deutschen und einen Englischen und ist nur ein Bischof zugegen, so soll die Conferenz einen Gehülfsen ernennen, um in Verbindung mit dem Bischofe zu handeln.

3. Antr. Werden die Prediger untersucht, in Ansehung ihres Verhaltens gegen ihre Mitmenschen, ob ihr Lebenswandel untadelhaft, und ob sie so viel Zeit als möglich anwenden, das Reich Gottes zu befördern.

Folgende Fragen sollen dann erledigt werden :

1. Sind während dem vergangenen Jahre Prediger gestorben ?
2. Welche sind Candidaten für das Predigtamt ?
3. Sind welche zu dem Ältesten-Amte zu ordiniren ?
4. Was ist für zufällige Ausgaben und den Gehalt von Reisepredigern gesammelt worden ?
5. Ist Abrechnung mit den reisenden Predigern gehalten worden ?
6. Haben sie ihre Gebühren erhalten ?
7. Wer ist willig, das kommende Jahr zu reisen, ohne Vorbehalt ?
8. Welche sind Aufsicht's-Älteste ?
9. Wie sind die Prediger dieses Jahr angestellt ?
10. Wann und wo soll unsere nächste Conferenz gehalten werden ?
11. Ist sonst noch etwas zu thun ?
12. Ist Alles, was gethan worden, in das Protokoll eingetragen ?

Fünfter Abschnitt.

Die Aufnahme von Predigern.

1. Frage. Wie soll ein Prediger aufgenommen werden ?

Antwort: Eine jede als Prediger vorgeschlagene Person soll von der Conferenz oder von einer Committee examinirt, und ihm folgende Fragen vorgelegt werden :

Hast du Gott in Christo als einen Sünde vergebenden Gott erkannt und selbst Vergebung deiner Sünden erlangt ?

Hast du nun Frieden mit Gott, und ist die Liebe Gottes durch den Heiligen Geist in dein Herz ausgegossen ?

Sagest du der Heiligung nach ?

Glaubest du, daß die Bibel Gottes Wort ist, und daß dieselbe allein den wahren Weg zu unserer Seelen Seligkeit enthält ?

Welchen Grund hast du für diesen Glauben ?

Was ist dein Beweggrund, daß du Erlaubniß verlangst das Evangelium zu predigen?

Was ist dein Erkenntniß vom Glauben, von der Sündlichkeit des Menschen, von Buße, von der Rechtfertigung, Heiligung und Erlösung?

Liegt dir dein eigen Heil und das Heil deines Nebenmenschen mehr am Herzen, als sonst alles andere in der Welt?

Kannst du dich dem Rathe deiner Brüder unterwerfen?

Bist du mit der Zuchtordnung unserer Kirche einverstanden?

Willst du gehorsam sein und bereit, zu reden oder zu schweigen, wie es die Brüder für gut finden?

Bist du willig, so viel in deinem Vermögen ist, den Reiseplan helfen zu erhalten, und ihn so viel als möglich zu unterstützen?

Keiner kann auf andere Weise wie auf Probezeit aufgenommen werden, und sei er aufgenommen oder zurückgewiesen, so soll ihm kein Unrecht geschehen.

Sechster Abschnitt.

Die vierteljährliche Conferenz.

1. Frage. Welche sind die Glieder der vierteljährlichen Conferenz?

Antwort. Alle Prediger, Ermahner, Führer und Aufseher, welche in dem Kreise oder der Station wohnen.

2. Frage. Welches sind die Geschäfte der vierteljährlichen Conferenz?

1. Antwort. Einen Sekretair zu ernennen, dessen Pflicht es sein soll, ein genaues Verzeichniß aller ihrer Unternehmungen zc. in ein besonders dazu bestimmtes Buch einzuzichnen und in selbem eine Liste der Glieder aus denen die Conferenz besteht, zu führen.

2. Antw. Eine allgemeine, oder wenn nöthig, eine besondere Nachfrage in Hinsicht des moralischen Verhaltens der Conferenzglieder anzustellen.

3. Antw. Anzunehmen und zu und zu untersuchen, alle Appellationen, Nachweisungen und Klagen, welche regelmäßig vor die Conferenz gebracht werden.

4. Antw. Abrechnungen mit dem Aufseher und reisenden Predigern zu machen.

5. Antw. Denjenigen Personen, welche durch wenigstens zwei Dritteile der Klasse, zu welcher sie gehören, empfohlen, die Erlaubniß zu geben, zu predigen, oder zu ermahnen. Jedoch soll Keiner angenommen werden der der Conferenz nicht hinlängliche Befriedigung, in Hinsicht seines Rufes: Erfahrung, Festigkeit in der Lehre, und Einverständniß mit unserer Kirche und der Zuchtordnung derselben geben kann.

3. Wie sollen Prediger von andern Gesellschaften aufgenommen werden?

Antw. Wenn sie mit guten Zeugnissen über ihr bisheriges Verhalten bei der Gesellschaft, zu welcher sie vordem gehörten, zu uns kommen und der vierteljährlichen Conferenz Nachricht geben, daß sie sich den Regeln unserer Gesellschaft sowie ihren Gebräuchen unterwerfen wollen. Dann mag die vierteljährliche Conferenz sie licenziren bis zur Sitzung der nächsten jährlichen Conferenz, und sollen sie dann, wenn ihr Betragen mit dem Evangelium Christi übereinstimmt, als Prediger oder Aelteste betrachtet werden.

4. Frage. Welche Nachweisungen sind bei einer Appellation erforderlich?

Antwort. Wenn ein Ermahner oder Prediger mit dem Ausspruche der vierteljährlichen Conferenz nicht zufrieden ist, soll er innerhalb dreißig Tagen nach einer solchen vierteljährlichen Conferenz, dem Sekretair hievon schriftlich Anzeige machen, mit der Hinzufügung, der ihn dazu veranlassenden Ursache, und es soll dann die Pflicht des Sekretairs sein, die Verhandlung mit dem Appellanten schriftlich der jährlichen Conferenz einzuschicken.

Es soll die Pflicht der vierteljährlichen Conferenz sein, dieselbe mit Gesang und Gebet zu öffnen und zu beschließen.

Siebenter Abschnitt.

Mitglieder im Allgemeinen.

1. Frage. Wie sollen Glieder in unserer Gesellschaft aufgenommen werden?

Antwort. Wenn sich bei irgend einer Versammlung eine Person anmeldet, ein Mitglied in unserer Gesellschaft zu werden, so soll der Prediger, der gegenwärtig ist, ihm folgende Fragen vorlegen:

Haft du Vergebung deiner Sünden erlangt und bist du jetzt entschlossen durch die Gnade Gottes deine Seele zu retten?

Wenn die Person diese Frage mit ja beantwortet, und Niemand nichts gegen sein Betragen einzuwenden hat, so soll ihm der Prediger die rechte Hand geben, solche Person soll als ein Mitglied in unserer Gemeinde geachtet sein, und mit der Einwilligung eines Jeden soll der Prediger dessen Namen in das Klafsbuch einschreiben; aber so lange eine Person obige Frage nicht aufrichtig mit Ja beantworten kann, so soll er nicht als ein volles Glied unserer Gemeinde angesehen werden.

Ein jedes Glied der Gemeinde soll bekennen, daß es die Bibel für Gottes Wort halte, daß es sich von nun an von ganzem Herzen bestrebe, sein Heil in Christo Jesu zu suchen, und seine Seligkeit zu schaffen mit Furcht und Zittern, um den zukünftigen ewigen Zorn zu entfliehen.

Ein jedes Glied soll sich bestreben, einen gottseligen Wandel zu führen; fleißig sein im Gebet, besonders im Verborgenen, und wo möglich zu seiner eigenen Erbauung, allen Versammlungen beizuwohnen, beides öffentlichen Gottesdienst und Betstunden.

Häupter von Familien sollen es nie versäumen, des Morgens und Abends mit den Ihrigen zu beten, und denselben ein gutes Exempel zu setzen in allen Christlichen Tugenden.

Ein jedes soll sich bestreben, genau als in der Gegenwart Gottes zu wandeln, sich bei seinen Geschäften an einen genauen Umgang mit Gott gewöhnen; nie Uebel von seinem Nebenmenschen reden, Liebe üben gegen Freund und Feind; dem Armen Gutes zu thun, und suchen in der That ein Nachfolger Jesu Christi zu sein.

Ein jedes Glied soll den Sabbath heilig halten, sowie es Gottes Wort erfordert! nicht zu kaufen noch zu verkaufen, sondern soll denselben in Andacht mit Lesen und Hören des Wortes Gottes, mit Singen geistreicher Lieder zur Ehre und Lob Gottes zubringen.

Ein jedes Glied in dieser Gemeinschaft sollte vierteljährlich aus freiem Willen so viel beitragen „da der Herr ihn gesegnet hat,“ 1. Corinth. 16, 2, um die reisenden Prediger zu unterhalten.

Die vorhergehenden Regeln sind zur besseren Ordnung in unserer Gesellschaft vorgeschrieben, und wir glauben, daß dieselben in dem Worte Gottes gegründet sind, weshalb ein jedes Glied der Kirche selbe, als ihm obliegend, genau zu beachten hat. Sollten welche sie übertreten, so sollen sie zuerst ermahnt, im Wiederholungsfalle aber können wir sie nicht länger unter uns dulden.

Achter Abschnitt.

Classen zu errichten und zu halten.

Indem es die Pflicht der Prediger und Aeltesten ist, Classen zu errichten, und Claß-Versammlungen zu halten, welches immer mit großer Mäßigung und Sanftmuth geschehen sollte, so ist in Liebe zu hoffen, daß kein Glied der Gemeinde in diesem Theile einem Prediger in der Ausübung seiner Pflicht anstößig oder hinderlich sein werde. Sollte aber ein Mitglied dagegen handeln, so ist er der nächsten vierteljährlichen Conferenz verantwortlich.

Neunter Abschnitt.

Classen.

1. Eine Classe soll aus drei oder mehrere Glieder bestehen, welche jährlich ein Glied aus ihrer eigenen oder andern Classe ernennen sollen, welcher ihr Führer genannt werden soll.

Frage: Was ist die Pflicht eines Führers?

Antwort: Es soll die Pflicht eines solchen sein, wenigstens einmal in der Woche in Bet- oder Claß-Versammlungen, seine Classe zusammen zu berufen, um mit ihnen über die geistliche Wohlfahrt ihrer Seelen zu sprechen und zur Einigkeit und Liebe unter einander zu ermahnen. Sodann soll er die Freiheit unserer Bet- und Claß-Versammlungen auf alle sich gut aufführende Personen ausdehnen, die denselben beizuwohnen wünschen.

2. Jede Classe soll jährlich einen erwählen der Stewart oder Verwalter genannt werde.

Frage: Was ist die Pflicht eines Verwalters?

Erste Antwort: Er soll vierteljährliche Collekten zum Besten der reisen, den Prediger halten; eine genaue Rechnung darüber führen, und dieselbe jeder vierteljährlichen Conferenz überliefern.

Zweite Antwort: Er soll der vierteljährlichen Conferenz für die Treue und sorgfältige Erfüllung seiner Pflichten als Verwalter seiner Classe verantwortlich sein.

Frage: Was soll geschehen, im Falle eines unmoralischen Vernehmens?

Antwort: Diejenigen Glieder, welche sich der Unmoralität schuldig machen, sollen von der Classe zu welcher sie gehören, oder einer Committee, bestehend aus Mitgliedern der Classe für und gegen ihn, gerichtet werden, und der Prediger der Station oder Bezirk, wozu der Angeklagte gehört, soll der Classe oder Committee vorsitzen; und wenn der Angeklagte schuldig befunden wird, so soll er aus der Gemeinde ausgeschlossen werden, es sei denn, daß er sein Vergehen durch Buß und Bekehrung wahrhaft bereue. Ist indeß ein Mitglied mit dem Ausspruche der Classe oder Committee unzufrieden, so kann deswegen an die vierteljährliche Conferenz appelliert werden, wenn dem Prediger, welcher bei der Richtung des Angeklagten die Aufsicht führet, zuvor Anzeige davon gemacht ist, jedoch soll es den Personen, die zuvor den Angeklagten richteten, nicht erlaubt sein, in das Urtheil der vierteljährlichen Conferenz einzusprechen.

Frage: Was soll gethan werden, wenn sich Mitglieder gegen einander versündigen?

Antwort: Sündiget aber dein Bruder an dir, so gehe hin, und strafe ihn zwischen dir und ihm allein. Höret er dich, so hast du deinen Bruder gewonnen. Höret er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zweien zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehe auf zweier oder dreier Zeugen Mund. Höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde. Höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner. Matthäi 18, v. 15, 16 u. 17.

Frage: Was soll geschehen, wenn zwischen Glieder und Prediger Uneinigkeiten entstehen.

Antwort: Der Prediger, welchen es bekannt wird, soll die Sache untersuchen und soll den streitenden Partheien vorschlagen, daß jede ein Glied ernenne, welche wieder einen dritten ernennen, der die Frage entscheiden soll.

Sollten aber die Gerichteten mit der Entscheidung der Committee unzufrieden sein, so können sie an die vierteljährliche Conferenz appelliren, aus deren Gliedern die Appellanten eine Committee von vieren ernennen kann, die wieder einen fünften erwählen, um die Sache zu entscheiden, und nach diesem Urtheile ist die Sache beschloffen. Irgend eine Person, die dennoch unzufrieden mit diesem Ausspruche ist, und jedes Glied, das sich weigert, in Hinsicht von Schulden oder anderen Zwistigkeiten die Sache einer Committee zu übergeben, nachdem es ihm von einem Prediger oder Führer gerathen ist, oder wenn er ein Glied beim Gerichte verklagt, ehe das vorher Gesagte von ihm befolgt ist, so soll er von der Gemeinde ausgeschlossen werden, es sei denn, die Sache ist von solcher

Art, daß er z. B. als Verwalter oder Executor einen gerichtlichen Prozeß anhängig machen muß, oder wenn er in Gefahr ist, einen Verlust zu erleiden. Jeder Claß-Führer soll ein Register in einem Buche, in Hinsicht der Verhandlungen der Kirche, Prozesse, Todesfälle, Ausschließungen und Appellationen führen, und eine Abschrift des Registers der vierteljährlichen Conferenz zuschicken.

Jegend eine Person, die eine Erlaubniß zum Ermahnen, oder Predigen zu erhalten wünscht, muß von zweidrittel der Classe, von der er ein Glied ist, solche durch den Führer unterzeichnete Empfehlung besitzen, die erforderlich ist, und sie der vierteljährlichen Conferenz seiner Station oder Bezirkes übergeben.

Zehnter Abschnitt.

Pflichten der Prediger.

Frage: Welches sind die Pflichten eines Predigers?

Antwort: Christum den Gekreuzigten zu predigen, wo sich nur Zuhörer einfinden; Classen-Versammlungen zu errichten, mit ihnen über ihren Seelenzustand zu reden, und sie zu trösten, die Angefochtenen zu stärken und zurecht zu weisen, die Trägen aufzumuntern und alle im Glauben, in der Gnade und Erkenntniß Jesu Christi zu erbauen suchen, nie unterlassen die Kranken zu besuchen, und bei allen Gelegenheiten sich zu bestreben, die Lehren die er predigt, durch einen ordentlichen und musterhaften Lebenswandel zu bekräftigen.

Fr. Welche Anweisungen werden unsern Predigern gegeben?

Antwort. Er sei fleißig; nie verliere er seine Zeit mit unnöthigen Dingen an einigem Orte; er sei immer ernsthaft; sein Wahlspruch sei: dem H e r r n g e h e i l i g e t; er meide allen Leichtsinn und Scherzen; er rede wenig, sei behutsam im Umgange mit dem weiblichen Geschlecht, und verhalte sich in allen Stücken als ein wahrer Christ.

1. Er sei immer abgeneigt, üble Gerüchte zu glauben; glaube von Niemand etwas Arges ohne gute Beweise, und lege alle diese Dinge immer so günstig aus, so viel es die Beschaffenheit derselben der Wahrheit gemäß, zuläßt.

2. Er rede von Niemand nichts Uebles; was er je von einem denken mag, behalte er solches bei sich selbst, bis er es demjenigen selbst, dem es angeht, sagen kann.

3. Sein Geschäft sei, Seelen zu retten so viel wie möglich; zu diesem Geschäft gebe er sich auf. Er besuche die es bedürftig sind. In allen Dingen handle er nicht nach seinem eigenem Gutdünken, sondern als ein Sohn des Evangeliums; als ein solcher steht es ihm zu seine Zeit, so wie diese Vorschrift lautet: mit Predigen, mit Hausbesuchen, mit Lehren und Beten, und Betrachtung des Wortes Gottes zuzubringen; damit gehe er um, bis der Herr kommt.

Gilfter Abschnitt.

Pflichten der Reiseprediger.

Frage: Welches sind die Pflichten eines Reisepredigers?

1. Antwort: Sich friedlich der ihm von der Conferenz übergebenen Stelle zu unterwerfen.

2. Er soll die Bestellungen auf seinem Bezirke regelmäßig besorgen, predigen und Gesellschafts-Versammlungen mit den Gliedern halten, wo immer es der Classe annehmlich ist.

3. Es soll die Pflicht des beauftragten Predigers sein, zu sehen, daß passende Personen als Aufseher oder Leiter in jeder Classe angestellt sind.

4. Er soll alle sechs Monate drei Abschnitte unserer Zucht-Ordnung in jeder Classe vorlesen, nämlich: den Glaubens-Artikel, die Pflicht der Mitglieder und die Pflicht der Leiter und Aufseher.

5. Bei dem Verhör von Gliedern soll er als Präsident sitzen, und einen richtigen Bericht darüber halten.

6. Er soll dem Aufsichts-Ältesten einen genauen Bericht über die Beschaffenheit seines Bezirks bei jeder vierteljährigen Conferenz abstaten, und er soll verantwortlich sein, für jede regelmäßige Bestellung, die er zu bedienen unterläßt.

7. Er soll allen Unter-Agenten des Religiösen Telescope's Auftrag geben, einen Bericht über alle Unterschreiber desselben in ihren respectiven Nachbarschaft zu halten.

8. Eben so soll er einmal des Jahres mit den Unter-Agenten abrechnen, und einen Bericht darüber an den Distrikt-Agenten abstaten.

9. Er soll ferner eine Liste von allen Bestellungen auf seinem Bezirke ausfertigen, und dem Aufsichts-Ältesten bei jeder jährlichen Conferenz überreichen, zum Besten desjenigen welcher diesen Bezirk nach ihm bereisen mag.

Zwölfter Abschnitt.

Ordination der Aeltesten.

1. An dem dazu bestimmten Tage soll eine schickliche Predigt oder Ermahnung gehalten werden.

2. Nachdem ihre Namen laut vorgelesen sind, so soll der Bischof oder Aelteste folgende Artikel dem- oder denjenigen vorlesen, die zur Ordination gewählt sein mögen :

„Denn ein Aeltester soll untadelich sein, als ein Haushalter Gottes : nicht eigensinnig, nicht zornig, nicht ein Weinsäufer, nicht pochen, nicht unehrliche Handthierung treiben ;

„Sondern gastfrei, gütig, züchtig, gerecht, heilig, keusch.

„Und halte ob dem Wort, das gewiß ist und lehren kann, auf daß er mächtig sei, zu ermahnen durch die heilsame Lehre, und zu strafen die Widersprecher.“ Titus 1, 7—9.

Fr. Hast du das Zutrauen, daß du innerlich durch den heiligen Geist dazu angetrieben werdest, das Amt eines Aeltesten auf dich zu nehmen, um darinnen Gott zu seines Namens Ehre, in der Gemeinde Christi zu dienen ?

Antw. Ich traue, mit der Hilfe Gottes.

Fr. Glaubest du der Heiligen Schrift alten und neuen Testaments ?

Antw. Ja ich glaube dieselben.

Fr. Willst du deinen Fleiß dahin anwenden, deinen eigenen Wandel nach der Lehre Christi einzurichten, und so viel in dir ist, dich der Heerde zu einem Muster des christlichen Lebens vorzustellen ?

Antw. Ich will, so Gott mein Helfer ist.

Fr. Willst du denen, welche etwa die Uebersicht über uns anvertraut sein mag, mit Ehrerbietung gehorsamen und ihren guten Ermahnungen mit einem willigen und friedlichen Herzen nachkommen ?

Antw. Ich will mich durch die Gnade Gottes dahin bestreben.

Dann wird gebetet.

Nach dem Gebete lege der Bischof und die Aeltesten einem jeden die Hände auf das Haupt und spreche :

„Nimm hiermit hin die Vollmacht, das Amt eines Aeltesten in der Gemeinde Gottes zu vollziehen. Im Namen Gottes, des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes.“ Amen.

Hierauf übergebe der Bischof oder Aelteste einem jeden besonders das Bibelbuch, sprechend :

„Nimm hiermit die Vollmacht, das Wort Gottes zu lesen und zu verkündigen in der Gemeinde Christi.

Dann soll der Bischof oder Aelteste beten. Nach dem Gebete soll er aus dem 12. Capitel Lucä, Vers 35—38 lesen:

Lasset eure Lenden umgürtet sein, und eure Lichter brennen; und seid gleich den Menschen, die auf ihren Herrn warten, wenn er ausbrechen wird von der Hochzeit, auf daß wenn er kommt und anklopft, sie ihm bald aufthun. Selig sind die Knechte, die der Herr, wenn er kommt, wachend findet. Wahrlich, ich sage euch: Er wird sich ausschürzen, und wird sie zu Tische setzen, und vor ihnen gehen, und ihnen dienen. Und so er kommt in der andern Wache und in der dritten Wache, und wird sie so finden, selig sind diese Knechte.

Dann bete der Bischof, oder Aelteste; worauf dann der folgende Segen ausgesprochen wird:

Der Friede Gottes erhalte eure Herzen und Sinnen in der Erkenntniß Jesu Christo unsers Herrn. Amen.

Dreizehnter Abschnitt.

Aelteste, ihre Wahl, Ordination und Pflicht.

Frage. Wodurch wird ein Glied Aeltester?

1. Nach einer Probezeit von drei Jahren mag ein Prediger der jährlichen Conferenz zur Ueberlegung vorgeschlagen, und wenn er nach Untersuchung von derselben als ein Aeltester gewählt wird, mag er durch Auflegung der Hände von einem Bischöfe und zwei Aeltesten ordinirt werden. Die jährliche Conferenz soll jedoch das Privilegium haben, Licentiaten einen Erlaubnißschein zu ertheilen, die Taufe zu verrichten, und das Sacrament zu reichen, wo es die Umstände nöthig machen.

2. Was ist die Pflicht eines Aeltesten?

So oft als er kann zu predigen, zu taufen, und dem Aufsichts-Aeltesten das Abendmahl des Herrn austheilen zu helfen; wenn aber der Aufsichts-Aelteste nicht bewohnen kann, dann sollen ein oder zwei Aelteste diese Pflicht verrichten; ebenso soll er alle Theile des Gottesdienstes verrichten; sich bemühen, Classen-Versammlungen zu errichten und zu halten, und in der Wahl der Aufseher und Leiter beistehen.

3. Wo ein seßhafter Aeltester oder Prediger, welcher selbst nicht Mangel leidet, an einem Orte prediget, wohin kein Reiseprediger kommt, so soll er eine Collette machen, auf gleiche Weise ein Verzeichniß darüber aufnehmen, und solche dem Aufsichts-Aeltesten oder der Conferenz zur Unterstützung dürftiger Prediger, welche unter armen Leuten predigen, übergeben oder übersenden.

4. Sollte ein Reiseprediger oder Aeltester wünschen, den ihm angewiesenen Bezirk zu verlassen, so muß er zuerst dem Aufsichts-Aeltesten schriftlich mit seiner Absicht bekannt machen; und sollte einer seine Stelle verlassen oder vernachlässigen, es sei denn, wegen Krankheit oder andern unvermeidlichen Umständen, so soll er der nächsten jährlichen Conferenz verantwortlich sein, und zu keinem Gehalte für die Zeit berechtigt sein, die er während dem Jahre gereiset sein mag.

5. Wo Prediger an einem Orte angesiedelt gefunden werden, welche arm und dürftig sind, und dennoch predigen sollen, so ist es billig und recht, daß die Aeltesten für ihren Unterhalt sorgen, in Verhältniß der Zeit, die sie anwenden, und indem sie eine Collette zu ihrem Besten unter den Gesellschaften ihres Distriktes machen; doch soll dieses die für die Reiseprediger ausgesetzte und bestimmte Summe nicht übersteigen.

Vierzehnter Abschnitt.

Aufsichts-Aelteste, Wahl und Pflicht.

Frage. Wie sollen die Aufsichts-Aeltesten gewählt werden?

Antwort. Sie sollen von der jährlichen Conferenz aus den Aeltesten für ein Jahr gewählt werden.

Fr. Was sind die Pflichten des Aufsichts-Aeltesten?

1. Antw. Den ihm angewiesenen Distrikt zu bereisen und so oft zu predigen als er kann.

2. Er hat die Uebersicht in seinem Distrikte über die reisenden und seßhaften Prediger, daß sie sich dem Evangelium gemäß betragen.

3. Er soll die vierteljährliche und große Versammlung bestellen und wo möglich bedienen, das Abendmahl ertheilen und vierteljährliche Conferenz halten mit den gegenwärtigen Predigern, Ermahnern und Vorgängern, auch untersuchen, ob die reisenden und seßhaften Prediger ihre Pflicht thun, besonders ob die seßhaften Prediger wo möglich alle Sonntage predigen; und wo

mehrere sind, dieselben zu Zeiten zu verwechseln, wie am meisten Nutzen geschafft wird: sie ermahnen, daß sie Zucht und Ordnung und Liebe und Ernst bei den Gemeinden erhalten.

4. Er kann gleicherweise, in Vereinigung mit zwei Aeltesten, Predigern, Ermahnern oder Leitern, (einen von jedem Umkreise,) die Prediger auf seinem Distrikte wechseln. Sollte ein Umkreis ohne einen Reiseprediger gefunden werden, so soll es seine Pflicht sein, einen Prediger zum Bereisen dieses Umkreises bis zur nächsten jährlichen Conferenz anzustellen.

5. Sollte es sich zutragen, daß kein Aufsicht's-Aeltester in irgend einem Distrikte wäre, so soll dem Bischof augenblicklich Nachricht davon gegeben werden, dieser soll einen Aeltesten im Distrikte dazu bestimmen, bis zur jährlichen Conferenz.

Fünfte Abtheilung.

Wahl der Bischöfe und ihre Pflicht.

Frage. Wie sollen die Bischöfe gewählt werden?

Antwort. Die Haupt-Conferenz soll sie erwählen, durch die Mehrheit der Stimmen; auch steht es der Conferenz frei, sie, die Bischöfe, noch auf vier Jahre beizubehalten. Die Gewählten oder Bischöfe müssen aber die unterschiedlichen Conferenzen bereisen können, sonst können sie nicht gewählt werden.

Fr. Was sind die Pflichten der Bischöfe?

Antw. 1. Bei unsern jährlichen und General-Conferenzen als Vorsteher zu handeln.

2. Sie haben mit den Aufsicht'sältesten, die auf der Conferenz gegenwärtig sind, den reisenden Predigern ihre verschiedenen Bezirke anzuweisen, doch mit der Einschränkung, daß keinem Reise-Prediger gestattet werde, länger als drei auf einander folgende Jahre an derselben Stelle zu verbleiben, ausgenommen, besondere Umstände machen es nothwendig, und dann nur mit Bewilligung der Conferenz.

3. Die Bischöfe in Vereinigung mit zwei von der Conferenz ernannten Aeltesten zeigen den Aufsicht'sältesten die Bezirke an, die sie zu bereisen haben,

4. Sie haben die Conferenzen zu bereisen, und haben im Geistlichen, die Oberaufsicht über alle Gemeinden.

5. Ihnen steht es zu, die Ordination zu vollziehen.

6. Wenn ein Bischof aufhört, die ihm angewiesenen Conferenzen in der Gemeinschaft zu bedienen, kann er doch sein bischöfliches Amt unter uns ausüben? Nein, es sei denn, daß er krank wäre, und was dergleichen Umstände mehr sein möchten.

7. Wenn es sich zutragen sollte, daß unsere Gemeinschaft zu einer Zeit keinen Bischof hätte, weil sie entweder gestorben oder suspendirt wären, oder wie es immer sein mag; wie soll Rath geschafft werden? Der Älteste welcher in Abwesenheit eines Bischofs gewählt wird zum Mitagiren an der Conferenz, soll die Bischofs-Stelle so lang bedienen als die Conferenz währet; dieser sogenannte Vorſitzer soll auch die andere Conferenz bedienen; er soll seinen Sitz mit dem dort gewählten Vorſitzer nehmen, um mit ihm in der Conferenz zu agiren; und der dort gewählte Vorſitzer soll eben so die andere Conferenz auch bedienen, damit eine jede Conferenz weiß, wie es bei der andern ausſieht; und daß Liebe und Gemeinschaft erhalten werde, u. ſ. w. bis zur Haupt-Conferenz, die wieder Bischöfe wählt.

8. Es soll der Bischöfe Pflicht sein, darauf zu sehen, daß während jeder jährlichen Conferenz eine schickliche Predigt gehalten werde.

Sechszehnter Abschnitt.

Sittenloses Betragen von Predigern.

Frage. Was soll geschehen, wenn ein Bischof, Aufsichtsältester oder Prediger sich eines Verbrechens schuldig gemacht, das im Worte Gottes verboten ist?

Antwort. Wenn ein Bischof wegen sittenlosem Betragen beschuldigt wird, so soll es einem Aufsichtsältesten und einem Ältesten bekannt gemacht werden, die sollen es untersuchen, ob etwas an der Sache sei — sie sollen aber keine Klage außer zwei oder drei Zeugen annehmen, als wie der Apostel sagt. Scheint es nun, daß er mit Recht beschuldigt wird, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Bischof eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen wo sie zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Bischof gegenwärtig sein sollen, und soll durch die zwei Aufsichtsältesten und drei Ältesten untersucht werden. Wird er schuldig befunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur jährlichen Conferenz; da sollen die Aufsichtsältesten und Ältesten es noch einmal untersuchen; wird er schuldig befunden, so soll er vom Amt suspendirt werden.

2. Wenn ein Aufsichts-Ältester wegen sittenlosem Betragen beschuldigt wird, so soll es der nächste Älteste und ein Prediger untersuchen. Zeigt es sich nun als ob er schuldig wäre, so sollen sie es schriftlich nehmen, und dem Aufsichtsältesten eine Abschrift davon schicken, und eine Zeit bestimmen, wo sie sollen zusammen kommen, wo die Kläger und der Aufsichtsälteste gegenwärtig sein. In Abwesenheit des Bischofs soll ein anderer Aufsichtsälteste und zwei Älteste gerufen werden, die sollen es mit untersuchen; wird er schuldig gefunden, so soll er schweigen bis zur Conferenz, da soll er verantwortlich sein.

3. Wenn ein Ältester oder Prediger sollte beschuldigt werden, wegen sittenlosem Betragen, so soll der Prediger in der Gegend, dem es bekannt wird, noch einen Prediger oder Ermahner oder einen Vorgänger mit sich nehmen, und es untersuchen; sollte es scheinen daß er schuldig wäre, so soll ihm Nachricht davon gegeben und eine Zeit bestimmt werden, wo sie, die Kläger und der Beschuldigte gegenwärtig sein. Drei Älteste oder Prediger sollen diesen Fall untersuchen und entscheiden, welche von den die Sache betreffenden Partheien ernannt werden sollen, indem jede Parthei einen, und diese beiden den dritten ernennen; wird er überführt, so soll er bis zur Conferenz schweigen, und derselben verantwortlich sein.

Sollte aber hinreichende Genugthuung in irgend einem der vorgehenden Fälle gegeben werden, entweder durch die Aeußerung von Reue oder auf andere Weise, so mögen sie heibehalten werden, wenn es für rathsam erachtet wird.

Sollte aber der angeklagte Prediger, Älteste oder Bischof es verweigern, zu erscheinen, nachdem er Benachrichtigung erhalten, wann und wo er zur Untersuchung und Rechtfertigung kommen muß, so soll er suspendirt werden, und die Committee soll ihm benachrichtigen, vor der vierteljährlichen oder jährlichen Conferenz zu erscheinen, um sich wegen der gegen ihn anhängigen Klagen zu verantworten, sollte er aber auch hier nicht erscheinen, so soll er (wenn er nicht durch Krankheit oder sonstige kirstige Umstände abgehalten wird) soll er suspendirt oder ausgeschlossen werden, wie es die Conferenz für rathsam hält.

Siebenzehnter Abschnitt.

Gehalt der Prediger.

1. Das Gehalt eines reisenden Predigers oder Bischofs, wenn er keine Familie hat, soll 100 Dollare und seine Reisekosten sein; wenn er eine Familie hat, soll er 200 Dollare, und seine Reisekosten, und Hausrente, die jedoch nicht über \$40 sich belaufen darf, sein.

2. Wenn aber ein Reise-Prediger eine Familie mit Kindern hat, soll die vierteljährl. Conferenz seines Kreises es in Ueberlegung nehmen, und nach ihrem Gutdünken, solchem Prediger, nebst obiger Summe, noch eine weitere Unterstützung gestatten, so daß es im Ganzen den Verhältniß und Umstand solcher Familie gemäß sein mag.

Frage. Was soll für solche Prediger gethan werden, welche nicht mehr fähig sind, ihre Stellen zu bedienen, oder deren Wittwen und Waisen?

Antwort. Die Interessen, welche den verschiedenen Conferenzen von dem „Benevolent Fond“ zu fallen, sollen zu deren Unterstützung verwandt jedoch streng darauf gehalten werden, daß der „Benevolent Fond“ zu keinem andern Zwecke verwandt werde. Wenn sich solche Fälle, wie in der Frage besagt, nicht ereignen, so sollen die Interessen von Jahr zu Jahr aufbewahrt werden, bis sich solche Fälle ereignen; und in diesem Falle soll es die Pflicht der Conferenz sein, eine Committee zu ernennen, von welcher ein Mitglied ein Bischof sein soll, die Interessen des Fonds zu vertheilen. Jedoch wird festgesetzt, daß einem unfähigen Prediger, welcher verheirathet, nicht mehr wie \$150 jährlich, und wenn unverheirathet nicht mehr wie \$75, einer Wittwe \$75 und einem Waisen, nicht mehr wie \$20 jährlich wenn es unter 12 Jahr alt ist, bezahlt werden soll.

G e s e n k e. Jeder Reiseprediger in unserer Gesellschaft soll der Conferenz jährlich einen Bericht abstaten über alle Geschenke zu dem Betrage von einem Thaler oder mehr, die er in seinem Bezirke für sich selbst oder für seine Familie erhalten haben mag. Und sollte die Conferenz überzeugt sein, daß irgend ein Bezirk Geschenke anstatt Collectionen gegeben hat, oder daß sich der Prediger bemüht hat, Geschenke anstatt Collectionen zu erhalten, in solchem Falle sollen die Geschenke, als Collectionen von der Conferenz betrachtet werden. Sollte es sich aber nach Untersuchung nicht so zeigen, so sollen diejenigen Prediger, die Geschenke erhielten, dieselben als ihr Eigenthum behalten, und zusätzlich alles, was ihnen die Zuchtordnung erlaubt, erhalten

Achtzehnter Abschnitt.

Heiraths=Ceremonie.

A n r e d e.

Wir sind hier vor dem Angesichte Gottes und dieser gegenwärtigen Zeugen versammelt, diese beiden Personen, nämlich N. und M. als Mann und Weib ehelich zusammen zu geben. Ist nun jemand gegenwärtig, dem etwa einige Hinderniß bekannt sind, warum diese beiden Personen nicht verehelicht werden sollten, der zeige es nun in gebührender Ordnung an, oder schweige auf ewig darnach.

(Wird nun keine Hinderniß angezeigt, so frage der Prediger den Mann:)

N. Willst du dieses Frauenzimmer für dein Eheweib annehmen, um in dem Ehestand mit ihr nach Gottes Ordnung zu leben? Willst du ihr Liebe und Trost erzeigen, in Gesundheit und Krankheit, in Reichthum und in Armuth ihr pflegen, und dich zu ihr alleine halten, wie es einem christlichen Ehemanne zustehet; sie nicht zu verlassen bis euch der Tod scheiden wird? So antworte Ja.

(Dann frage der Prediger das Frauenzimmer:)

M. Willst du diesen Mann für deinen Ehemann annehmen, um in dem Ehestand mit ihm nach Gottes Ordnung zu leben? Willst du ihm gehorsam und dienstwillig sein, ihm Liebe und Ehrfurcht erzeigen, und ihn pflegen in Krankheit, in Gesundheit, in Reichthum und Armuth; mit Verlassung aller andern, dich alleine zu ihm halten, wie es einem christlichen Eheweib zustehet; ihn nicht zu verlassen, bis euch der Tod scheiden wird?

So antworte Ja.

Nun lasse der Prediger die Verlobten einander die rechte Hand geben, und spreche:

Was Gott zusammengesügt hat, soll der Mensch nicht scheiden.

Weil nun M. und N. sich in den Ehestand begeben, und solches allhier vor Gottes Angesicht und den gegenwärtigen Zeugen deutlich bekannt und bezengt haben, so erkläre ich sie hiermit als Mann und Weib, im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes. Amen.

Neunzehnter Abschnitt.

Von der Nothwendigkeit der Einigkeit unter uns selbst.

Lasset uns, (aus dem welches wir schon erkannt haben,) das Uebel der Spaltungen in Grundsätzen, der Uneinigkeit im Geist, oder in der Ausübung, wie auch die schrecklichen Folgen davon für uns selbst und andere tief empfinden. Sind wir einig, was kann uns widerstehen? Theilen wir uns, so verderben wir uns selbst, das Werk Gottes, und die Seelen unserer Mitglieder.

Fr. Was kann daher gethan werden, um eine genauere Vereinigung unter uns zu Wege zu bringen?

1. Antw. Laßt uns von der Nothwendigkeit derselben völlig und tief überzeugt sein.

2. Betet ernstlich für, und redet treu und offenherzig mit einander.

3. Wenn wir uns versammeln, so laßt uns niemals ohne Gebet auseinander gehen.

4. Haltet sehr darauf, daß keiner des andern Gaben verachte.

5. Redet niemals unlauter oder leichtsinnig von einander.

6. Laßt uns suchen, einer des andern Charakter in allen Dingen zu vertheidigen, in so fern es mit der Wahrheit übereinstimmend ist.

7. Arbeitet in Ehren, achtet einer den andern höher als sich selbst.

8. Wir empfehlen eine ernstliche Untersuchung der Ursachen, Uebeln, und Cur des Herzens und der kirchlichen Trennungen.

Zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Vom Besuchen von Haus zu Haus, und dem Einsdärken praktischer Religionen.

Fr. Wie können wir denen, die sich unserer Obforge anvertrauen, ferner behülflich sein?

Antw. Indem wir ihnen Unterricht ertheilen, in ihren Häusern, welches sehr nöthig ist, um das Vertrauen und die Gemeinschaft mit Gott zu befördern; ferner sich in der Weltliebe ab und an einen himmlischen Wandel gewöhnen; sich herzlicher Bruderliebe befleißigen, auf daß kein arges Denken und Nichten einer gegen den andern sein mag, und thun wie wir wünschen gethan zu haben.

Jeder Prediger muß es sich zu seiner Pflicht machen die Leute in ihren Häusern zu besuchen, sie ermahnen, in allem Guten geschickt zu sein. Bis dies nicht gethan wird, und zwar mit Ernst und Eifer, so werden wir im Ganzen wenig gebessert werden, und unsere Gottseligkeit wird nicht tief genug gegründet: folglich wo wir auch sein mögen, soll kein unnützes Geschwätz aus dem Munde gehen.

Ohne Zweifel sind diese Hausbesuche und besonders Ermahnungen auf die feierlichen Worte des Apostels gegründet:

„Ich gebe dir den Auftrag vor Gott und dem Herrn Jesu Christi, der bei seiner Wiedererscheinung die Lebendigen und die Todter richten wird. Bitte, predige das Wort, halte damit an, es sei zur rechten Zeit oder zur Unzeit, strafe, drohe, ermahne, mit aller Geduld und Langmuth. — 2. Tim. 4, 2—2.

Ein u. zwanzigster Abschn.

Von dem Unterrichte der Jugend.

Frage. Was soll zum Besten der heranwachsenden Jugend gethan werden?

Antwort. Wer für Gott und das Heil der Seelen einigen Eifer hat, der fange das Werk ohne Verzug an. Wo Kinder sich befinden, versammle sie so oft es thunlich und nützlich ist; rede mit ihnen; unterweise und ermahne sie im Guten; bete mit ihnen ernstlich doch kindlich, daß sie ihren Schöpfer und Erlöser mögen kennen lernen in ihrer Jugend.

Zwei u. zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Bücher = Drucken.

Keinem von unsern Predigern oder Mitglieder soll es erlaubt sein, Verfasser eines Doktrinal-Buches oder Pamphlets zu werden, ohne die Genehmigung der jährlichen Konferenz oder einer von derselben gewählten auserlesenen Committee.

Sollte irgend ein Prediger oder Mitglied dieses Gesetz übertreten, so ist er der Classe, der vierteljährlichen oder jährlichen Konferenz, wie die Sache sein mag, verantwortlich.

Drei und zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Schwören.

Wir glauben, daß die Art und Weise die Wahrheit zu bezeugen durch Affirmation, wenn wir in gesetzlicher Form dazu aufgefordert werden, feierlich, gewissenhaft und vor Gott und Menschen b i n d e n d für uns ist, die Wahrheit zu sagen, die ganze Wahrheit, und nichts als die Wahrheit.

Vier und zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Hitzige Getränke.

Die Distillation und der Verkauf hitziger Getränke soll durchaus der ganzen Gesellschaft verboten sein. Sollte irgend ein Prediger, Ermahner, Führer oder Mitglied vor und nach der nächsten jährlichen Conferenz im Jahre 1842 sich damit abgeben, so soll er für das Vergehen der vierteljährlichen oder jährlichen Conferenz, von welcher er ein Mitglied ist, verantwortlich sein. Wenn der übertretende Bruder ein Ermahner, Führer oder Mitglied ist, so soll es die Pflicht des beauftragten Predigers sein, ihn in Sanftmuth zu vermahnen, wenn es ein Prediger ist, so soll es die Pflicht des vorstehenden Aufsehers der vierteljährlichen oder jährlichen Conferenz sein, ihn zu ermahnen, von seinem unheiligen Gewerbe abzustehen; und wenn alle freundlich Versuche scheitern, so soll solch' ein Uebertreter, der zu unserer Kirche gehört, von derselben ausgeschlossen werden. Indessen soll diese Regel nicht so in Anwendung gebracht werden, um Druggisten und andere in ihrem Verkauf von Medicinen, oder andere in ihren geschäftlichen Arbeiten, abzuhalten.

Fünf und zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Freimauerei.

Freimauerei in jedem Sinne des Wortes, ist gänzlich von uns gemißbilliget, und soll auf keine Weise in unserer Gesellschaft geduldet werden. Sollten einige unserer Mitglieder fortfahren, Freimauer-Logen zu besuchen, oder irgend einer ihrer Prozeffionen als Glieder beizuwohnen, oder sonst sich der Bruderschaft beigesellen, so schließen sie sich dadurch als Glieder unserer Kirche aus.

Sechs und zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Sklaverei.

Alle Sklaverei, in jedem Sinne des Wortes, ist gänzlich verboten, und soll auf keine Weise in unserer Kirche geduldet werden. Sollten einige in unserer Gesellschaft gefunden werden, welche Sklaven halten, so können sie keine Mitglieder bleiben, außer sie manumittiren oder setzen solche Sklaven persönlich frei.

Sieben und zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Constitution der Conferenz = Buchdruckerei in Circleville, Ohio.

I. Artikel.

1. Das obige Etablissement soll die Conferenz-Buchdruckerei der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo genannt werden.

2. Alle hierin bewilligte gesetzgebende Gewalt ist der Haupt-Conferenz besagter Kirche übertragen, deren Pflicht es ist, irgend einige Regeln zu machen und zu verbessern, die ihrem Urtheile nach zweckmäßig scheinen mögen.

3. Es soll die Pflicht der Haupt-Conferenz sein, alle vier Jahre drei Trustee's zu ernennen, oder zu wählen, desgleichen einen Herausgeber und Schatzmeister anzunehmen.

4. Wenn sich eine Erledigung in dem Departement des Herausgebers oder des Schatzmeisters durch Krankheit, Tod und auf sonstige Weise ereignet, so soll es die Pflicht der Trustee's sein, eine andere taugliche Person oder Personen zur Ausfüllung besagter erledigter Stelle bis zur Sitzung der nächsten Haupt-Conferenz anzunehmen.

5. Gleicherweise soll es, im Falle sich eine Erledigung bei den Trustees durch Tod oder sonst ereignet, die Pflicht der übrigen beiden sein, eine dritte Person zu wählen, um besagte erledigte Stelle bis zur Sitzung der nächsten Haupt-Conferenz zu füllen.

6. Der Ertrag des besagten Etablissements über die Ausgaben für reisende und unfähige Prediger, soll für Wittwen und Waisen verwendet, und zu diesem Ende unter die verschiedenen jährlichen Conferenzen vertheilt werden, wie es die Haupt-Conferenz anwenden mag.

II. Artikel.

1. Es soll die Pflicht der Trustee's sein, alle sechs Monate mit dem Schatzmeister und Herausgeber Rechnungs-Abschluß zu halten und der Schatzmeister soll einen Bericht ausfertigen und diesen der jährlichen Conferenz des Scioto-Distriktes, sowie der General-Conferenz übersenden.

2. Es soll die Pflicht der jährlichen Conferenz sein, in der Zwischenzeit der Haupt-Conferenz darauf zu sehen, daß der Herausgeber, Schatzmeister und die Trustee's ihre Amtspflichten thun, wie diese Constitution es verlangt.

3. Auf öffentliche Anklage irgend eines der obengenannten Beamten soll, es die Pflicht der obengenannten jährlichen Conferenz sein, die besagte Anklage zu untersuchen, und wenn sie ihrer Meinung nach schuldig sind, sie zu verabschieden, und die erledigte Stelle bis zur Sitzung der nächsten Haupt-Conferenz zu besetzen.

III. Artikel.

1. Es soll die Pflicht des Herausgebers sein, strenge Aufmerksamkeit auf alle zum Einrücken eingesandte Mittheilungen zu richten, dieselben, wenn es nöthig ist, zu revidiren, und sie einzurücken; jedoch, wenn er irgend einige erhielt, welche seiner Meinung nach nicht mit der Lehre und den Regeln unserer Kirche übereinkämen, so soll er solche dem Schatzmeister oder einem oder mehreren der Trustees vorlegen, und wenn dieselben sie verwerfen, sie zurückhalten, sonst aber einrücken.

2. Es soll die Pflicht des Herausgebers sein, eigene Materie für jedes Blatt zu schreiben, das Lesen des Correcturbogens genau zu besorgen, Artikel auszuwählen, &c.

3. Gleichermäße soll es die Pflicht des Herausgebers sein, eine allgemeine Aufsicht über die Arbeiten in der Buchdruckerei zu halten, und darauf zu sehen, daß sie ihre Zeit nicht im Müßiggange zubringen.

4. Die Trustee's sollen eine allgemeine Aufsicht über den Herausgeber und Schatzmeister halten, und darauf sehen, daß sie ihre Pflicht thun, und wo nicht, mögen sie ihres Amtes entsezt werden, bis zur Sitzung der nächsten jährlichen Conferenz, welche die Sache entscheiden soll, in welchem Falle die besagten Trustee's die erledigte Stelle besetzen sollen.

IV. Abschnitt.

Es soll die Pflicht des Schatzmeisters sein, Sorge für alle einstweiligen Angelegenheiten der Buchdruckerei zu haben, alle dazu gehörigen Bücher zu führen, auf Anweisung der Trustee's solche Materialien zu liefern, als zu allen Zeiten nöthig sein mögen, und unter der Anweisung besagter Trustee's als ein allgemeiner Buch-Agent zu handeln.

2. Der Schatzmeister, wenn er nicht mit seinen amtlichen Pflichten beschäftigt ist, soll wie eine andere Hand in der Buchdruckerei arbeiten.

3. Endlich sollen die Trustee's das Recht haben, irgend einige Nebengesetze zu machen, als ihnen zur Regulation der mindern Buchdruckerei-Angelegenheiten dienlich scheinen mögen, mit dem Vorbehalt, daß sie keine der Bestimmungen dieser Constitution verlegen.

Acht u. zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Buch = Agentenschaft.

1. Es soll ein Buch-Agent in jedem jährlichen Conferenz-Distrikte ernannt werden, dessen Pflicht es sein soll, alle Bücher 2c. zu übernehmen die ihm von dem Schatzmeister gesandt werden, und die dem Conferenz-Buchdruckerei-Etablissement in Circleville zugehören.

2. Der besagte Agent soll dem Schatzmeister des Conferenz-Buchdruckerei-Etablissements in Circleville Rechnung abzulegen schuldig sein.

3. Es soll die Pflicht des Buchagenten sein, so weit es sicher und thunlich sein mag, alle ihm von dem Schatzmeister gesandten Bücher an die Distrikt-Prediger zum Nutzen der Kirche zu vertheilen.

4. Der Buchagent soll eine richtige Rechnung über alle für das besagte Conferenz-Buchdruckerei-Etablissement gemachten Vertheilungen und Collectionen halten. Wenn Bücher in seinem Distrikte fehlen, soll er den Schatzmeister vermittelst Briefe davon benachrichtigen.

5. Der Agent soll mit dem Schatzmeister jede sechs Monate vermittelst Briefe oder auf andere Weise abändern.

Nenn u. zwanzigster Abschnitt.

Vom Bauen von Versammlungshäusern und der dabei zu beobachtenden Ordnung.

Fr. Ist etwas anzurathen im Betreff des Baues von Versammlungshäusern?

Ant. Laßt alle unsere Versammlungshäuser einfach und anständig, mit freien Sizen, und mit nicht mehr Kosten als nöthig ist, erbaut werden.

Fr. Wen sollen unsere Versammlungshäuser, und die dazu gehörigen Grundstücke im Kaufbriefe zugeschrieben sein?

Antw. Einer Versammlung von Trustee's und ihren Nachfolgern im Amte, als anvertrautes Eigenthum der Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo.

Fr. Wie wird eine Versammlung von Trustees gewählt ?

Antw. Wo immer eine Gesellschaft die Absicht hat, ein Versammlungshaus zu bauen oder zu kaufen, so soll es die Pflicht des Leiters oder Aufsehers einer solchen Gesellschaft sein, es der vierteljährlichen Conferenz des Bezirks oder der Station zu welcher sie gehören, anzuzeigen, deren Pflicht es sein soll, eine Versammlung von nicht weniger als drei einsichtsvollen Trustees zu ernennen. Mit dem Vorbehalt jedoch, daß von keinem verlangt werde, länger als vier Jahre zu dienen, es sei denn unumgänglich nothwendig.

Keine Person soll als zulässig zur Wahl als ein Trustee für irgend eins unserer Versammlungshäuser sein, welche kein regelmäßiges Mitglied unserer Kirche ist.

Fr. Wie sollen Trustees beim Bauen eines Versammlungshauses verfahren ?

Antw. Sie sollen eine Schätzung des Betrags machen, welcher nöthig ist, eine Grundlotte zu kaufen, zu bauen und solche andere Verbesserungen zu machen, als für nöthig erachtet werden mögen ; sie sollen jedoch nicht zu bauen anfangen, bis zwei Drittheile des nach dieser Schätzung nöthigen Geldes gesichert oder unterschrieben, und gleicherweise ein gesetzliches Recht zu der Lotte erlangt ist, auf welcher sie zu bauen beabsichtigen.

Sie sollen jährliche Versammlungen halten, und eine richtige und gerechte Urkunde in einem zu diesem Zwecke angeschafften Buche von allen Verhandlungen ihrer Versammlung eintragen, welches Buch der vierteljährlichen Conferenz des besagten Districts oder der Station jederzeit zur Inspection offen sein soll.

Sie sollen Sorge für das Eigenthum des Versammlungshauses, das Grundstück, den Begräbnißplatz, &c. tragen.

Fr. Was soll gethan werden, wenn sich in der Versammlung der Trustees eine Erledigung ereignet, dadurch, daß einer aufhört ein Mitglied zu sein, durch Entsetzung vom Amte, Tod, oder sonst ?

Antw. Es soll die Pflicht der vierteljährlichen Conferenz sein, eine passende Person oder Personen zu ernennen, solche Erledigung oder Erledigungen auszufüllen.

Fr. Was soll gethan werden, wenn irgend eines unserer Häuser leer ist ?

Antw. Es soll die Pflicht einer vierteljährlichen Conferenz des nächsten Bezirks sein, nicht weniger als drei schickliche Personen als Trustees zu ernennen, welche die Gewalt haben sollen, wenn sie dazu von zwei Drittheilen der Glieder dieser Conferenz ermächtigt werden, solches Versammlungshaus und was dazu gehört, verpachten, zu verrenten oder zu verkaufen, und das von solchem Verpachten, Verrenten oder Verkauf entstandene Geld zu verwenden, wie die Conferenz es anweisen mag.

U n m e r k u n g. Die Trustees sollen in allen Fällen Sorge tragen, die Uebertrags-Urkunden gesetzmäßig ausgefertigt und in den County-Urkunden Buche, wo das Eigenthum ist, eingetragen zu haben, das ist, die Kaufs-Urkunde auf sie und ihre Nachfolger im Ante als anvertrautes Eigenthum der Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo geschrieben zu haben, und daß sie ein Versammlungshaus zum Gebrauch der Mitglieder der besagten Kirche den Regeln der Zucht-Ordnung gemäß bauen lassen, die von Zeit zu Zeit von der Kirche angenommen werden mögen.

Dreizigster Abschnitt.

B e u g n i s s e.

Mitglieder von unserer Gesellschaft welche von einem Platze nach dem andern verziehen, sollen sich ein Zeugniß, welches durch einen Führer oder Prediger unterzeichnet sein soll, verschaffen, nämlich: „Ich bezeuge hiermit, daß N. B. ein Glied, von gutem Betragen in der Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo bisher gewesen ist. (Datum.)“

Wenn Prediger von einem Conferenz-Distrikt nach einem andern ziehen, so sollen sie sich von der Conferenz, in welcher sie bisher gestanden, ein Zeugniß verschaffen.

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CERTIFICATION.

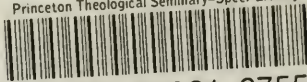
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